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UNIFORM EDITION.

AN ESSAY

ON THE SIN AND THE EVILS

OF

COVETOUSNESS;

AND THE

HAPPY EFFECTS WHICH WOULD FLOW

FROM A SPIRIT OF

CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.

ILLUSTRATED BY

A VARIETY OF FACTS, SELECTED FROM SACRED AND CIVIL HISTORY, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

BY THOMAS DICK, LL. D.

AUTHOR OF THE "CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER,"—"PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION,"—"PHILOSOPHY OF A FUTURE STATE,"—"IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIETY BY THE DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE,"—"THE MENTAL ILLUMINATION AND MORAL IMPROVEMENT OF MANKIND," etc. etc.

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PREFACE.

THE subject of the following treatise, considered in all its aspects, is one which has an important bearing on the happiness and improvement both of Christian and Civil society. Impressed with a deep conviction of this truth, the author intended, sometime ago, to address his fellow-men on the subject; but other engagements prevented him from entering on the consideration of the several topics connected with it, till about the month of August last, when a Prize, to be given for the best Essay on the subject, was announced in some of our religious periodicals. Being then engaged in conducting his work "On the Mental Illumination of Mankind," &c., through the press, and in various other avocations, he could not find leisure to finish the Essay within the time prescribed in the advertisement. It was, however, sent sometime afterwards, and returned *unopened*, on the ground "*that the carriage and porterage of it were not paid;*" and had it not been for a particular circumstance, the package might have been lost, as there was no intimation on its exterior as to whom it should be addressed and returned. These circumstances the author was disposed to consider as little short of an exemplification of *Covetousness*—the very evil which the Essays advertised for were intended to counteract. For, although a hundred Essays had been sent, the carriage of which was two shillings each, the whole sum thus expended would not have amounted to above £10—which could only be a trivial sum to the individuals who offered the Prize. And equity required, that those who had been at the expense of paper and quills, and who had devoted a certain portion of their time to the subject, in compliance with the request of those gentle-

men, should have been freed from the expense of carriage, especially when no intimation of this circumstance was contained in the announcement. But we too frequently find, that it is much easier to laud a virtue than to practise it, and to denounce a vicious principle than to act in opposition to it.

The Essay is now presented to the public by the Author, on his own responsibility, as he originally intended, in the nope that it may not be altogether inefficient, in counteracting the principle of Covetousness, and stimulating the Christian to those noble acts of Beneficence by which physical and moral evil may be prevented, religious society improved, and the world enlightened and regenerated. Having been composed in the course of four or five months, and in the midst of many interruptions and avocations, it is hoped, the critical reader will candidly overlook any slight inaccuracies it may contain.

Should any pecuniary emolument be derived from the sale of this volume, the greater portion of it will be devoted to the purpose of social and religious improvement.

BROUGHTY FERRY, near DUNDEE,
April, 1836.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ESSAY

ON COVETOUSNESS OR THE LOVE OF MONEY.

INTRODUCTION.

Christianity has now subsisted in the world through out the lapse of eighteen hundred years. During the first periods of its existence, when its facts and doctrines were propagated in their native purity and simplicity, uncontaminated with Pagan ceremonies and worldly maxims; its progress was rapid, and was accompanied with many astonishing and auspicious results. The empire of the Prince of Darkness was shaken to its centre, the altars of Paganism were overturned, its oracles struck dumb, its worship forsaken, and its temples levelled with the ground. "The word of the Lord had free course and was glorified," and multitudes both of men and women, of the higher and the lower ranks of society, formerly immersed in all the vices and abominations of heathenism, were "turned from darkness to light, and from the worship of dumb idols to the service of the living God." By the unwearied labours of the Apostles and their successors, the knowledge of the true God was communicated to the inhabitants of the Grecian Islands, Asia Minor, the Northern coasts of Africa, the Southern shores of Europe, and throughout the greater part of the widely extended Roman Empire, where the abominations of Pagan Idolatry had, for ages, debased and demoralized the minds of men. The darkness of heathenism began gradually to vanish before the light of the "Sun

of Righteousness," and a new and happier era appeared to dawn upon the world. The influence of Christian principle was felt in all its force; love knit together, in "the bond of perfection," the various members of the Church; a spirit of holy fortitude, and of non-conformity to the world, pervaded the minds of the disciples of Jesus, and the "lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life," were considered as unworthy the pursuit of those who accounted themselves "strangers and pilgrims upon earth," and travellers to a blessed immortality.

Little more than two centuries, however, had elapsed, before a worldly spirit, and a "love of pre-eminence," began to appear, and to diffuse their malign influence throughout every department of the visible church,—which prepared the way for the unhappy dissensions which afterwards arose, and for the long reign of Antichrist over the nations. During the period of more than a thousand years "darkness" again "covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Pagan maxims and ceremonies began to be blended with the pure precepts and sublime doctrines of the Gospel; vain speculations were indulged on questions which the limited faculties of man are unable to resolve; a multitude of unmeaning rites were substituted in the room of love to God and man; pride, and a desire of domination, usurped the place of meekness and humility; the power of the clergy was augmented; the bishops aspired after wealth, magnificence, and splendour; and their *avarice*, extortion, and licentiousness, at length became notorious even to a proverb. Errors in religion, whether real or supposed, were punished by civil penalties and bodily tortures; and the select few who adhered to the cause and "testimony of Jesus," and lifted up their voice against such abominations, were reproached and persecuted, and obliged to seek for shelter in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. Hence it happened, that the spirit of genuine religion was almost evaporated; carnal maxims and policy were introduced; the love of riches and aggrandizement began to gain the ascendency; and thus a

barrier was interposed to the propagation of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the renovation of the world. Even since the Reformation from Popery, it is amazing how little practical influence Christianity has obtained over the nations who profess to have submitted to its authority. While its leading principles and precepts are not called in question, as matters of *mere opinion*, the great majority of professing Christians seem to *act* as if they were to be left entirely out of view in their ordinary deportment, or as if there were no specific difference between Christian principles and the corrupt maxims of the world.

It is a fact which cannot be denied, that, cosidering the long period which has intervened since its first promulgation, Christianity has never yet produced all the practical and beneficent effects which might have been expected from a religion introduced by the authority of heaven, and confirmed by a series of the most august and striking miracles,—nor has its empire been extended throughout the nations in any degree proportionable to the zeal of its first propagators, and to the rapidity and the extent of its progress after it was first announced to the world. This is a fact which has filled its sincere friends with deep regret, and which has been held up by its adversaries as a presumptive proof that its claims to a Divine origin are unfounded. Although there are, doubtless, to be found, in the principles of the Divine government, reasons inscrutable by us, why Christianity has been so slow in its progress and so limited in its effects; yet, I presume, that one grand reason is to be found in the fact, that the great majority of its professors have paid more attention to its *theory* than to its *practical requisitions*—that its *original record* has been too much neglected, and human systems substituted in its place, and that contentions about matters of "doubtful disputation" have occupied the room of fervent piety and practical godliness. No nation under heaven has yet recognized ts principles and maxims, in all their extent, in its civil and criminal code, in its legislative enactments, in its colonial transactions, and in its intercourse with other

nations. No Christian church has yet been formed on the principle of *a full and unreserved* recognition of its precepts and laws, in all their bearings and practical applications; and even the most exemplary Christians, in their general deportment, and particularly in the application of their wealth, fall far short of what the religion of the Bible inculcates.

It is now high time that Christianity were recognized in all its holy principles and preceptive requirements, and that its votaries show to the world that they have imbibed its heavenly spirit, and are determined to rise superior to the grovelling affections and the carnal policy of worldly men, and to follow the footsteps of their divine leader, and of his holy prophets and apostles. If we expect to behold the moral world regenerated, and Zion appear "beautiful and glorious in the eyes of the nations," we must exhibit our religion, not merely in theory, but in its *renovating and beneficent effects.* If we ask surrounding nations to embrace its doctrines, and introduce among their people its divine institutions; if we entreat the tribes of the heathen world to listen to its stupendous facts and to receive its ordinances and laws; or if we urge the infidel to examine with attention the evidences of its divine original, they have a right to demand from us proofs and examples of its benignant tendency and of its harmonious and beneficent effects. If we could show, that, wherever it is professed, it uniformly produces love, brotherly affection, forgiveness of injuries, peace and harmony, philanthropy, temperance, charity, and a spirit of noble generosity; if we could say with Lactantius, one of the early Apologists, "give me a man that is wrathful, malicious, revengeful, and, with a few words of God, I will make him calm as a lamb, give me one that is a covetous, niggardly miser, and I will give you him again liberal, bountiful, and dealing out of his money by handfuls; give me one that is fearful of pain and death, and immediately he shall despise racks and crosses, and the most dreadful punishments you can invent"—could we, with truth and sincerity, propose to the world such arguments and examples in behalf of our holy religion,—could

we show that in every case where a Christian or a Christian society is to be found, such virtues are uniformly displayed; the progress of Christianity over the globe would soon be accelerated, and "righteousness and praise would," ere long, "spring forth before all the nations." And, I verily believe, that, till we can exhibit our religion in all its amiable and beneficent effects, its progress will be comparatively feeble, and its enemies numerous and powerful. We have been long engaged in controversies about *theological opinions;* and, in such contentions, have too frequently overlooked the grand practical objects which it is the design of Christianity to accomplish. The government of the temper, the regulation of the affections, and the mortification of the principle of sin and corruption, have been, in a great measure, lost sight of, amidst the fiery zeal which has sometimes been displayed in the propagation of dogmas and opinions, which do not enter into the essence of our holy religion. While we have endeavoured to display our bravery as champions in the cause of orthodoxy, we have too frequently given vent to unhallowed passions, and aspired after worldly emolument and applause, instead of "the honour which cometh from God alone."

Of all the practical requisitions of Christianity, there is none which seems to be so much overlooked as the duty of contributing, with *liberality*, for the extension of the Gospel, the diffusion of knowledge, and the general improvement of mankind. This has been owing to the prevalence of that most vile and unchristian propensity, designated in Scripture by "COVETOUSNESS, which is IDOLATRY"—a propensity which has affected all ranks of men, from the highest to the lowest, and which is characteristic of multitudes who make a glaring profession of evangelical religion. Were this single affection either undermined or extirpated, a deluge of miseries would soon be swept away from our suffering world—philanthropy would distribute its thousand blessings among all ranks; universal education would be established in every land Zion would be built up even in troublous times; "God would appear in his glory" to men; the benighted heathen

would, ere long, be enlightened with the "day-spring from on high," and the way prepared for the ushering in of that glorious period when "the knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Messiah."

In the illustration of this subject the following plan may be adopted:

I. I shall describe the disposition or propensity designated by "*Covetousness*," as it has operated, and still operates, in Christian and civil society.

II. Demonstrate its *absurdity* and *irrationality*.

III. Show its inconsistency with Christian principle, and the general tenor of the Word of God.

IV. Illustrate some of the *Evils* which flow from the indulgence of Covetousness.

V. Investigate the *Principles* by which Christians should be directed in the application of their wealth.

VI. Illustrate some of the *Benefits* which would result to Christians and general society, were Covetousness undermined, and an opposite principle universally cultivated.

VII. State some of the *means* to be used, in order to counteract the influence of Covetousness, and to promote a spirit of Scriptural liberality among Christians.

VIII. Offer a few solemn considerations to different classes of individuals in relation to this subject.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE DISPOSITION, OR PROPENSITY DESIGNATED BY COVETOUSNESS, AND THE VARIOUS MODES IN WHICH IT HAS OPERATED IN THE WORLD, AND IN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

Covetousness consists in an *inordinate* desire of any worldly enjoyment, particularly *riches*, for the purpose of gratifying ambition, avarice, or sensual desires. It is the opposite of generosity, or that liberality and *contentment* which the word of God inculcates.

The Creator has furnished the material world with an immense variety of objects, and has endowed us with sensitive organs, through the medium of which these objects may be perceived and enjoyed. He has also implanted in us desires and affections which, in subordination to higher aims, were intended to be directed to the objects of the visible world, and the enjoyment of the good things of this life. We may lawfully desire water to quench our thirst, food to nourish our bodies, clothes to cover us, and comfortable shelter and accommodation —if such desires be regulated by scripture and reason, and confined within their proper bounds. We may even desire the possessions of others when they are willing to relinquish them, and when we are able and willing to offer them a fair and equitable compensation. We may lawfully labour by the exertion either of our bodily or mental powers, to acquire a more comfortable house or garden than we now possess, and to enjoy a little more of the external bounties of Providence, when proper motives regulate our exertions and our aims. For, the Creator has exhibited, in his creation around us, an immense variety of beauties and sublimities, to gratify the eye and the imagination, and has furnished the world in which we live with a multiplicity of delicious fruits, flowers, herbs and roots, to gratify every taste, as well as to afford nourishment to our animal system. It is, therefore, evident that he intends his creatures should participate

the sweets of sensitive enjoyment. "For every creation of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." "I know," says Solomon, "that it is good for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life, and also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, for it is the gift of God." Every thing in the system of nature is so arranged as to produce pleasure and sensitive enjoyment, when used with moderation, and according to the design intended by the Creator. To condemn the moderate use of sensitive enjoyments, or to inculcate the austerities of an ascetic life, is, therefore, repugnant to the dictates both of reason and revelation, and tends to frustrate the beneficent designs of Him whose goodness and "tender mercies are over all his works."

It is not, therefore, in the *simple* desire of worldly good that *covetousness* consists, but in an *inordinate* desire of sensitive objects and enjoyments—a desire which is inconsistent with the rational nature of man, and with our duty to our Creator and our fellow-men. Covetousness assumes a variety of forms, and manifests itself in many different modes. 1. It appears in its most degrading form in *hoarding money*, and *acquiring houses and lands*, for the mere purpose of *accumulation*, when there is no intention of enjoying such wealth, or bringing it forth for the good of society. This is the characteristic of the man who is denominated a *miser*—a word which originally signifies *wretched*, or *miserable*, as all such persons necessarily are. 2. It appears under the pretence of *making provision for children*—a pretence which is generally nothing more than a cloak to cover the principle of avarice which is fixed in the mind. 3. It operates most frequently for the purpose of gratifying sensual propensities—displaying elegance in dress and furniture, and giving scope to a spirit of pride and ambition. In these, and many other ways, this vile affection manifests itself, robbing man of the true glory of his nature, degrading him in some respects below the level of the brutes, undermining every principle of religion, counteracting human happiness, preventing the renovation of the world, and reducing the

soul to the level of a grovelling idolator who "worships and serves the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

This inordinate desire of wealth has been productive of more mischief and misery in the world than almost any other unhallowed affection of the human heart. It has been the malignant source of almost all the evils which have been introduced into the social state, and of all the sorrows and sufferings to which the inhabitants of the earth in every age have been subjected. In order that we may clearly perceive the *malignity* of this affection, it may not be improper to take a cursory view of the *effects* it has produced, and of the *manner* in which it has operated, both in the world at large and in Christian society.

SECTION I.

On the operations and effects of Covetousness as displayed in the world at large.

This vile affection may be considered as the *first display* which was made in our world of *sin* or rebellion against God. Our first parents commenced their apostasy from their maker by coveting the fruit of "the tree of knowledge," which he had expressly interdicted under the highest penalty. Though they were surrounded by the *munificence* of the Deity, though they were permitted to eat of every other tree in the garden of Eden, and possessed every thing that was pleasant to the eye and delicious to the taste—yet they dared to put forth their hands to the forbidden fruit, from the covetous propensity of enjoying what was not their own, and the *ambitious* desire of being "like the gods, and knowing good and evil." This covetous and ambitious act "brought death into the world and all our woe," and was the prelude and forerunner of all those devastations and miseries which avarice and ambition have entailed on the inhabitants of the world. We have reason to believe, that this woful propensity, in conjunction with ambition, with which it

is inseparably connected, in one shape or another, was the principal cause of the wickedness which abounded in the world before the flood, and of the overwhelming deluge which swept away its inhabitants. For we are told, that "the earth was filled with violence"—plainly intimating, that wars and devastations were every where carried on—that a system of rapine and plunder universally prevailed—that the strong and powerful forcibly seized the possessions of the weak—that the poor and needy were robbed and oppressed—that cities were demolished, fields and vineyards laid waste, and the ploughshare of destruction driven through every land.

The whole history of the world, since that period, may be considered as little else than a revolting detail of the operations of covetousness and ambition, and of the direful effects they have produced on the destinies of mankind. The oppressions which Babylon and Assyria exercised over the Jews and neighbouring nations, the plundering of the sacred vessels which belonged to the temple of Jehovah; the mad expedition of Xerxes against the Grecians, with his numerous fleets and armies, and the slaughters and devastations they produced; the boundless ambition of *Alexander*, his cruelties and injustice, his burning of cities, plundering of palaces and temples, and the destruction of thousands and millions by his conquering armies, while engaged in the mad pursuit of universal empire; the atrocities and murders committed by his successors, and the commotions and revolutions which followed in their train; the plunder, butchery, and devastation of the Roman legions, and the terror they inspired throughout surrounding nations; the dreadful contests between Rome and Carthage, known by the name of the *Punic wars*, which lasted for more than forty-five years, and in which millions of human beings were sacrificed to the demon of war; the slaughter and ravages produced by the jealousy and ambition of Cæsar and Pompey; the terrible desolations and carnage produced throughout Asia and Africa by Mahomet and his ferocious disciples, while they were laying waste cities without number, and cutting in pieces all the enemies of Islamism; the com

motions, assassinations, murders, and contests which happened during the reign of the Roman Emperors; the pillage of Rome by the barbarous *Alaric*, when the streets and houses were deluged with blood, the buildings enveloped in flames, the monuments of ancient grandeur overturned, and the soldiery raged and ravaged with all the ferocity of infernal demons; the irruption of the Goths and Vandals, who rushed like a torrent into the Roman Empire, who respected neither rank, age nor sex, who covered the earth with carnage, and whose route was uniformly marked with desolation and with blood; the incursions of the Scythians, who rushed with irresistible impulse on western Europe, exterminating the inhabitants wherever they came, and threatening almost total destruction to the human race; the ravages of Jenghis Khan, the most bloody conqueror that ever existed, who, in twenty-two years, destroyed fifteen millions of human beings, and transformed their countries into hideous deserts; the mad expeditions of the Crusaders, who went forth by millions along the eastern parts of Europe, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the inhabitants of Asia; the ferocious and fiendlike wars of the Turks against Christian nations—these, and thousands of similar scenes of atrocity and plunder which have entailed misery and destruction on hundreds of millions of the human race, are to be attributed to the insatiable lust of covetousness, when pandering to the purposes of ambition and worldly aggrandizement.

In the wars of modern times, and in the numerous expeditions which have been undertaken for the discovery and colonization of new countries, the same avaricious principles have been almost uniformly displayed. No sooner had Columbus discovered a portion of the Western World than the cursed *love of gold* began to absorb the whole attention of his followers. No desire to confer benefits on the natives, who almost adored them, seems ever to have entered their breasts; but, on the other hand, they displayed every species of perfidy, inhumanity, and injustice; and inflicted every kind of cruelty on the Indians, if they could but extort from them the golden trea-

sures they possessed. As if the acquisition of gold had been the great end of human existence, their whole faculties and exertions were directed to this object. They went from one part of the island on which they had landed to another; they sailed eastward and westward, and from one island to another; and wherever they went, their sole inquiry was for the mountains and vales where gold was to be obtained. The island Hispaniola was the earliest settlement of the Spaniards in the New World, on account of the quantity of gold it supplied. They forced its inhabitants, as so many slaves, to dig this object of their avarice out of the bowels of the earth, and when the source of it was dried up, they exterminated the natives by a series of barbarities more shocking than ever before disgraced the history of man. Of two millions of inhabitants which the island contained when discovered by Columbus in 1492, scarcely 150 were alive in 1545, only about fifty years afterwards. The conquest of Mexico by Cortez and his followers, impelled by an insatiable lust for gold, was accompanied with horrors, atrocities and slaughters more dreadful and revolting than almost any other scenes recorded in the annals of our race. To prepare the way for enjoying the plunder they had in view, the unoffending Indians were butchered by thousands, and their towns laid in ruins. Throughout the whole of their progress, their route was marked with perfidy, injustice, carnage, and deeds of atrocious cruelty. On one occasion, sixty Caciques or leaders of the Mexican empire, and 400 nobles were burned alive with the utmost coolness and deliberation, and, to complete the horrors of the scene, the children and relations of the wretched victims were assembled and compelled to be spectators of their dying agonies. On another occasion, when the inhabitants of the city of Mexico were celebrating a festival, and all the people, particularly the nobles, were dressed in their richest decorations,—under the pretence of an intended conspiracy, the Spaniards, in order to glut their avarice, fell upon the unthinking Mexicans, slaughtered 2000 of the nobles, and stripped their dead bodies of all their valuable ornaments. Every

right was violated which is generally held sacred even by hostile nations. On every trivial occasion the Indians were massacred in great numbers, their lands apportioned among the Spaniards, the inhabitants reduced to slaves, and forced to work without payment at all their public works, while the officers distributed into different provinces, faithfully imitated their avaricious commander in all his excesses and barbarities. In the siege of Mexico alone, no less than a hundred thousand of the natives fell by the sword, besides those who perished by famine and other causes connected with warfare. And all these revolting scenes were produced in violation of every moral principle, merely to gratify the unbounded desires of sordid minds for the unsatisfying treasures of gold and silver. And while they had the effrontery and impiety to elevate the standard of the *Cross*, and to implore the God of armies to assist them in their conquests, no means were ever used to meliorate either the physical or moral condition of those whom they had so cruelly plundered. But God, whose laws they had so wantonly violated, caused them to suffer a just retribution, as a punishment for their enormities and their avaricious desires. For numbers of them were butchered by the enraged Mexicans in their retreat from the capital, and those who were taken alive were carried off in triumph to the temples and sacrificed with all the cruelties which revenge could invent, to the god of war,—while their companions, at a distance, heard their dismal screams and piteous lamentations. Many of them so overloaded themselves with bars of gold as retarded their flight, so that they fell ignominiously, the victims of their abominable avarice, and a great part of the gold and treasures they expected from their conquests, was commanded by their enemies to be thrown into the lake. Such are the effects of the operation of that detestable passion which has so long degraded the character of man, and which tramples under foot every principle of virtue, and every dictate of justice and humanity.

The same atrocities were committed, and the same execrable propensities displayed in the expedition of

Pizarro and his followers for the conquest of Peru. In order to glut their avarice for plundering the golden treasures of this country, the basest treachery, and the most cold-blooded cruelties, were exercised. Under profession of amity, they seized upon the *Inca* or emperor of the country, who had received them in a friendly manner, and had commanded his attendants to offer the strangers no injury; and butchered, with deliberate and unrelenting fury, above 4000 of his attendants, who never offered the least resistance; after which they passed the night in the most extravagant exultation, at the greatness of the plunder they had acquired from the bodies of the slain. The Inca, in order to regain his liberty, promised them as many vessels of gold as would fill an apartment twenty-two feet long, sixteen wide, and eight high; and after having despatched messengers throughout his kingdom to collect the promised treasures, he had fulfilled his engagement—they not long after, under the most ridiculous pretences, condemned him to be burned alive. The booty they obtained by such atrocious deeds, amounted to more than two millions of pounds sterling. The day appointed for the partition of this enormous sum was the festival of St. James, the patron saint of Spain; and, although assembled to divide the spoils of an innocent people, procured by deceit, extortion, and cruelty, they had the impiety and audacity to commence the transaction with a solemn invocation of the name of God, as if they had expected the benediction of Heaven in distributing those wages of iniquity. Such was the commencement and such the progress of the expedition by which the empire of Peru was subjugated to the dominion of Spain. A *curse* has rested upon the wealth which was thus procured; and the nation that sanctioned such injustice and atrocities, has, in the just providence of God, suffered the punishment due to its cruelties and avarice. Instead of being enriched by such treasures, it has been impoverished. That very wealth which its inhabitants so ardently desired, and for the acquisition of which they violated every principle of religion and morality, laid the foundation of Spanish indolence, checked the increase of population,

prevented the exertions of industry in the improvement of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, which are the only true sources of wealth, and has reduced their country from one of the most powerful and wealthy of European kingdoms, to a state of comparative poverty. The wars which have, of late years, been carried on in that country, and in its former colonies, and the commotions and massacres which are at this moment taking place, may be considered as part of the punishment for national offences, inflicted by Him who "visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation"—thus, by a kind of retributive justice, avenging the many innocent nations which were ravaged by their forefathers on the continent of America.

Another mode in which Covetousness has displayed its malignity is, *the traffic in slaves.* Among the circumstances connected with this trade, are found whatever is dark in treachery, odious in cruelty, or horrible in war,—whatever afflicts the body or degrades and tortures the soul. It is a traffic which has suffocated thousands of human beings in the cells of a floating dungeon, plunged ten thousands into a watery grave, and doomed the survivors to long years of captivity and sorrow, under the lash of relentless task-masters—a traffic which has produced wars and massacres of every description, torn asunder the most endearing ties, trampled under foot every dictate of justice and humanity, transformed civilized men into infernal fiends, and embodied in it whatever has been feared or imagined in the cup of human woe. Yet this infernal traffic has been encouraged and carried on by men who make high pretensions of their improvement in science and civilization; by *States* that, with the most glaring inconsistency, boast of the liberties they have acquired above all other nations; by Roman Pontiffs who pretend to be Christ's vicegerents on earth; by thousands who profess the greatest zeal for the interests of Religion, and who would consider themselves as scandalized and insulted, were we to refuse them the name of *Christians*—and all for the purpose of glutting their insatiable lust of Avarice, at the expense of the blood

and sufferings of their fellow men. Early in the 15th century, the Portuguese, under the authority of the *Pope*, explored the African coast, planted colonies, and reduced the Africans to slavery. The decrees of five successive Roman Pontiffs "granted, conveyed, and confirmed to the most faithful king [of Portugal], a right to appropriate the kingdoms, goods, and possessions of all infidels, wherever to be found, *to reduce these persons to perpetual slavery*, or *destroy them from the earth*," for the declared purpose "of bringing the Lord's sheep into one Dominican fold under one Universal Pastor." By whom, then, was this atrocious commerce opened, and by whom has it been so long and ardently pursued? By the subjects of their *Most Faithful, most Catholic, and most Christian* Majesties, *Defenders of the Faith;* by *British* subjects, who have only lately been *forced* to abandon it, and by the citizens of the *Most Republican* States, with the sanction of his holiness the Pope. It has been calculated that, in this accursed traffic, eight millions of slaves have been shipped in Africa for the West India Islands and the United States, ten millions for South America, and two millions have been taken and held in slavery in Africa; in all, about twenty millions of negroes who have been consigned either to bondage or to death.* Reckoning the value of each slave at £40 Sterling, this horrid trade has accumulated for its unprincipled abettors, the enormous sum of £800,000,000, a sum which would be nearly sufficient for effecting the physical and moral renovation of our world; but the greater part of which, we have too much reason to believe, has been wasted in luxury and debauchery.

I have stated these more atrocious acts of avarice, for the purpose of showing to what a pitch of wickedness and barbarity the principle of covetousness will lead its votaries when no human laws or prudential considerations interfere to obstruct its progress. Men are apt to imagine, that the occasional indulgence in covetousness,

* See Gurley's "Life of Ashmun," page 101. Printed at Washington, in 1805.

in respect to little things, can produce no great harm, when actions directly criminal are not resorted to for its gratification,—that, to take a quarter of an ounce from a pound of sugar, an inch from a yard of print, a "remnant" from a suit of clothes,—to ask more than the fair value for an article of merchandize, to withhold a few pence or shillings from a philanthropic institution, or to desire the wealth of others which we cannot by fair means obtain, must be faults of trivial consideration, and can produce little injury to general society. But such persons ought to consider, that *the very same principle* which operates in such cases, *if left to its own native energies*, and to operate without control from the force of human laws, would lead to all the atrocities and scenes of horror to which we have now alluded, and would, ere long, transform the world into a field of plunder, an immense charnel house, and a habitation of demons. Were its influence *universal*, it would destroy the happiness of rational beings, subvert the moral order of intelligent agents, both in heaven and on earth, and even sap the foundations of the throne of the Eternal. Hence, it is described in Scripture as "THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL," and designated by the term IDOLATRY; a crime which, above all others, has a tendency to *degrade* the character of man, and to subvert the relations in which he stands to his fellow creatures, and to his *Creator*—which includes in it a comprehensive summary of wickedness, pride, falsehood, malignity, rebellion, hatred of moral excellence, and the basest ingratitude towards him "in whom we live and move, and have our being."

Besides the more barbarous acts of plunder to which I have adverted, there are innumerable other acts in the conduct of nations and societies, flowing from the same principle, which are every day committed without a blush at their enormity and injustice. Almost the whole of our colonization system has been commenced and carried on from a principle of avarice; when the rights of independent tribes have been invaded, and their territories wrested from them without an adequate compensation. Whether we go to America or Africa, the West

Indies or Hindostan, or wherever colonies have been established by European nations, we shall find numerous exemplifications of the truth of this position. Instead of rendering our geographical discoveries subservient to the happiness and improvement of unenlightened tribes; we have sent out expeditions to deprive them of the property which God and nature had given them, to massacre and to hunt them as wild beasts from the face of the earth, for the purpose of acquiring plunder, and gratifying our avaricious desires. And when we have thus laid the foundation of our colonies in avarice and injustice, we have next oppressed their inhabitants by arbitrary enactments and exorbitant taxes, which have frequently led to protracted and expensive wars, in which our treasures, acquired by injustice and oppression, have been wasted, our previous riches and prosperity diminished, and our finances sometimes brought to the verge of ruin. It is thus that the Governor of the world frequently punishes the crime of avarice, by forcing it again to disgorge those riches which were unjustly acquired, and to make nations perceive, if they have any moral perceptions, their sin in their punishment. Hence when the British roused the indignation of their American Colonies, by their despotic enactments and oppressive taxations, a desolating and unnatural war ensued, which cost Britain not only many thousands of valuable lives, (about two hundred thousand in all) but no less than £139,000,000; a sum far greater than had ever been acquired from the possession of these colonies, and which might have sufficed to transform Britain into a terrestrial paradise, and to establish churches and seminaries to the utmost extent, for the diffusion of knowledge and religion among all classes of the inhabitants.

There would be no end to the illustrations of the operation of covetousness, as displayed on the general theatre of the world, were we to enter into particulars. The barbarous practices connected with *piracy*, or the plundering of vessels at sea, and the deeds of violence and atrocity which pirates have committed; the robberies and depredations which have been perpetrated by land, and

the horrid murders which have been committed by lawless banditti in pursuit of spoil; the cruelties exercised by Turkish Bashaws and Moorish Emperors, in squeezing from their subjects exorbitant taxes; the plundering of caravans in the desert by wandering Arabs; the savage practices of a set of men denominated *wreckers;* the perfidy and perjuries of spies and informers, in convicting the innocent of crimes in the hope of reward; the trepanning of soldiers and the impressment of seamen; the secret murders committed on friends and relatives in hopes of obtaining an inheritance; the treachery of executors and lawyers in betraying their trusts, in order to fill their coffers; the frauds of public officers in conducting the affairs of governments, the embezzling of public money by close corporations for the purpose of selfishness and sensuality; the oppressions which, in almost every nation, have been exercised by unprincipled and avaricious men, on the poor and destitute, the widow and the orphan; these, and hundreds of similar modes in which avarice is displayed, would require volumes to describe and record the revolting details.

SECTION II.

On the effects of covetousness, and the manner in which it has displayed itself among those who acknowledge the authority of Christianity, and profess to submit to its dictates.

When the leading facts and doctrines of Christianity were first publicly proclaimed on the day of Pentecost, those who were converted to the faith imbibed its heavenly spirit, and acted according to its holy requisitions. This was particularly manifested in their noble indifference to earthly possessions, and their anxious desire to consecrate the wealth which God had given them to purposes of Christian beneficence. So great was their admiration of the love of God, and the riches of his grace, and so elevated their hopes of heavenly felicity, that they looked down with a becoming contempt on worldly trea

sures, except in so far as they were subservient to the purposes of benevolence, and to the promoting of the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. For, we are told, that "all that believed," being inspired with mutual love and affection for each other,—"had all things common." Nay, to such an extent did this generous principle prevail that they who had estates or other valuable effects, "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every one had need." This Christian liberality and heroic indifference to the world, continued to distinguish the followers of Jesus, in a greater or less degree, during the two first centuries of the Christian era. For the sake of Him who had "redeemed them with his blood," and brought them "from darkness to marvellous light," they cheerfully parted with houses and lands, and brethren and sisters, and subjected themselves to the severest persecutions, that they might obtain "a better resurrection," and an "incorruptible inheritance." They were admonished beforehand that they were to be "betrayed by friends and brethren and kinsfolk, accused before rulers and kings, and hated of all men for his name's sake." And these premonitions were fully realized in the experience of all who professed an adherence to "the testimony of Jesus." At the instigation of the heathen priests and emperors, every species of contumely and cruelty was inflicted which the wicked ingenuity of our fallen nature could invent. Some were slain by the sword, some were whipped and scourged, after the cruel manner of the Romans, and others were roasted in the flames. Some were stabbed with forks of iron, some nailed to a cross, some torn by wild beasts, and others drowned in the sea, or stoned to death; some starved with hunger or killed with cold; some had their hands and tongues dissevered from their bodies, and others were wrapt in combustible garments, and fire set to them when evening came on, that they might serve like torches to dispel the darkness of the night. Hierome, in his epistle to Cromatius, observes,—"There is no day in the whole year to which the number of five thousand martyrs cannot be ascribed, except only the first day of January." So that every

year no less than *one million, eight hundred and twenty thousand* Christians must have perished from the earth by the infliction of such demoniacal punishments,—and all to glut the avarice and revenge of Pagan priests and rulers. Yet the number of those men "of whom the world was not worthy," still continued to increase throughout every province of the Roman empire. They magnanimously looked down on all the wealth and splendour of this passing scene as unworthy to be compared with the glory which was about to be revealed. "They counted all things as dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ, for whom they had suffered the loss of all things; they knew in whom they had believed," and "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of earth, and having respect to the recompense of reward." How many members of the Christian church should we have in modern times, were they all exposed to such persecutions and tribulations! Were all professing Christians animated with such heavenly principles and affections as distinguished the primitive saints and martyrs, there would be little need to write an Essay on the evils of Covetousness, or to enforce the duty of a noble and disinterested liberality on the members of the visible church. But, alas! the gold has become dim, and the most fine gold has changed! The great majority of those called *Christians*, in our times, can scarcely be distinguished, in their dispositions and conduct, from civilized Pagans, and the professed men of the world, "whose god is their belly," who glory in their wealth, and "who mind earthly things."

When the Christian church began to enjoy the favour of worldly men, it was not long before many of its members began to imbibe a worldly spirit. As the wealth and honours conferred on the church increased, the heavenly zeal of its votaries diminished, and a spirit of *Covetousness*, and a desire for worldly honours and distinctions, began to prevail throughout all the official departments connected with Christian worship and instruction.

Even so early as the third century, this melancholy change began to appear, particularly in the contests of the Bishops for power and pre-eminence, and for worldly splendour and magnificence. Though a considerable number of them continued to exhibit to the world illustrious examples of primitive piety and virtue, yet "many of them were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord, and addicted to many other vices, that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were the unworthy ministers."* The Bishops assumed, in many places, a princely authority, particularly those who had the greatest number of churches under their inspection, and who presided over the most opulent assemblies. "They appropriated to their evangelical function, the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty. A throne, surrounded with ministers, exalted above his equals the servant of the meek and humble Jesus, and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and the minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority. The example of the bishops was ambitiously imitated by the presbyters, who neglecting the sacred duties of their station, abandoned themselves to the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life. The deacons, beholding the presbyters thus deserting their functions, boldly usurped their rights and privileges, and began to despise those lower functions and employments which they had hitherto exercised with so much humility and zeal, and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order."†

Wherever luxury, ambition, and a desire for worldly splendour, gain ascendency over the mind, *Avarice* follows in the train as an *inseparable* concomitant. In the progress of the corruptions which were afterwards introduced into the church, this degrading passion was displayed, with shameless effrontery, in all its impious and demoralizing effects. The rapaciousness of the bishops

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* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Century third. † Mosheim,

and popes, and of almost every order of ecclesiastics, became excessive and even proverbial; and they did not hesitate to employ the most insidious and sacrilegious means to gratify their covetous propensities. The possessions of the church were sold to the highest bidders, or turned into a patrimony for the bastards of the incumbents. Frauds and abuses of every description were practised; legends were forged, lying wonders invented, and all the resources of fable and forgery exhausted, to celebrate exploits which had never been performed. Skulls and jaw-bones, legs and arms, were collected under pretence of being the relics of the primitive martyrs, and deposited in churches in order to procure the rich presents of wealthy supplicants, who flocked to them for deliverance under affliction and dangers. Marriages, wills, contracts, the interests of families and of courts, the circumstances connected with the living and the dead, were all converted into instruments and occasions for increasing the power and riches of the church. The ignorance and superstition which the corruptions of Christianity had introduced, were dextrously improved by the ecclesiastical rulers to fill their coffers, and to drain the purses of the deluded multitude. All the various ranks and orders of the clergy had each their peculiar method of fleecing the people and increasing their revenues. "The bishops when they wanted money for their private pleasures, granted to their flock the power of purchasing the remission of the penalties imposed upon transgressors, by a sum of money which was to be applied to certain religious purposes, or, in other words, they published *Indulgences*, which became an inexhaustible source of opulence to the Episcopal orders, and enabled them to form and execute the most difficult schemes for the enlargement of their authority, and to erect a multitude of sacred edifices which augmented the external pomp and splendour of the church. The abbots and monks, equally covetous and ambitious, had resource to other methods of enriching their convents. They carried about the country the carcasses and relics of the saints, in solemn procession, and permitted the multitude to behold, touch,

and embrace those sacred and lucrative remains, at certain fixed prices. By this raree-show, the monastic orders often gained as much as the bishops did by their indulgences."* At length the Roman Pontiffs assumed the chief power over this profitable traffic, and "when the wants of the church or the demon of avarice prompted them to look out for new subsidies, published not only a universal, but a *plenary* remission of all the temporal pains and penalties which the church had annexed to certain transgressions." "They even audaciously usurped the authority which belongs to God alone, and impiously pretended to abolish even the punishments which are reserved in a future state for the workers of iniquity, a step which the bishops, with all their avarice and presumption, had never once ventured to take.†

It was by the sale of such indulgences that Pope Leo X. carried forward the magnificent structure of St. Peter's church at Rome. He published a system of indulgences suited to all ranks and characters of men, and promised a plenary remission to all who should contribute their money to the furtherance of this and other ambitious projects. So that the foundations of this edifice, which has been so much extolled, were laid, and its superstructure reared, by means the most impious and diabolical, by a display of reckless perfidy and insatiable avarice, and at the expense of undermining the whole fabric of Christianity, and usurping the prerogatives of the King of heaven. To such a pitch was this daring impiety carried, that indulgences were farmed out to the highest bidders, who, to make the best of their bargains, procured the ablest and most eloquent preachers to extol the efficacy, and enhance the value of such wares. A price, on a graduated scale, was set upon the remission of sins of every description, not even excepting the most horrid crimes, such as the murder of a father, mother, or wife; so that for ninety livres, or a few ducats, or even for half a guinea of English money, a pardon might be procured from the "Apostolic Chancery," for crimes which all civilized nations punish with death

* Mosheim, Cent. 12. † Ibid.

The raging thirst of dominions which consumed the Roman Pontiffs, prior to the Reformation, and their arrogant endeavours to oppress all that came within the reach of their power, were accompanied with the most impudent and insatiable extortion. "All the provinces of Europe were in a manner drained to enrich these ghostly tyrants, who were perpetually gaping after new accessions of wealth, in order to augment the number of their friends, and the stability of their dominions; and every stratagem was used to rob the subject without shocking the sovereign, and to levy taxes under the specious mark of religion."* Such was the shameless rapacity which then prevailed, that even in that age of superstition and servility, the eyes of all ranks began to open and to perceive the vileness and impiety of the pretensions of the ecclesiastical orders. Not only private persons but also the most powerful princes and sovereign states exclaimed loudly against the despotic dominion of the Pontiffs, the fraud, avarice and injustice that prevailed in their councils, the arrogance and extortion of their legates, and the unbridled licentiousness and rapacity of the clergy and monks of all denominations, till at length the Reformation dawned and brought to light a scene of extortion and profligacy produced by the lust of covetousness, which had never before been exhibited with such effrontery in any country under heaven. In such a state of things it was no wonder that ignorance prevailed, that morality was undermined, and the peculiar doctrines of Christianity thrown into the shade and entirely overlooked. The public worship of the Deity was little more than a pompous round of external ceremonies more adapted to dazzle the eye than to enlighten the understanding or to affect the heart. The discourses of the clergy were little else than fictitious reports of miracles and prodigies, insipid fables, wretched quibbles and illiterate jargon which deceived the multitude instead of instructing them. The authority of the holy mother church, the obligation of obedience to her decisions, the virtues and merits of the saints, the dignity and glory of

* Mosheim, Cent. 12.

the blessed virgin, the efficacy of relics, the adorning of churches, the endowing of monasteries, the utility of indulgences, and the burnings of purgatory, were the principal subjects on which the clergy descanted, and which employed the pens of eminent doctors of divinity, because they tended to fill the coffers of mother church, to gratify her ambition, and to advance her temporal interests.

It is impossible to ascertain, with any degree of accuracy, the vast sums of money and the immense property which for ages were extorted from the people of Christendom for such unhallowed and sacrilegious devices. But it must have amounted to many thousands of millions of pounds, the greater part of which was employed for the purposes of devastation and carnage, of luxury and debauchery, and for tyrannizing over the people, whom the clergy had reduced to poverty and ignorance, by their shameful licentiousness and unbounded rapacity. The one-fifth of the wealth thus acquired, had it been spent for the good of the church, as was impiously pretended, might have been sufficient to have diffused the knowledge of the gospel of Christ over every region of the globe, and to have evangelized every portion of the Pagan world. But, alas! it was wasted in promoting schemes directly opposed to the principles and interests of genuine Christianity, forming one striking instance, among many, of the incalculable good which has been prevented, and the numerous evils which have been entailed on the world by the indulgence of Covetousness. The Pope's present revenues as a temporal prince, have been calculated to amount to at least £1,000,000 sterling, per annum, arising chiefly from the monopoly of corn, the duties on wine and other provisions. Over and above these, vast sums are continually flowing into the Papal treasury from all the Roman Catholic countries, for dispensations, indulgences, canonizations, annats, the pallia, the investitures of bishops and archbishops, and other resources. It is computed, that the monks and regular clergy, who are absolutely at the Pope's devotion, do not amount to less than 2,000,000 of persons, dispersed through all the Roman Catholic countries to assert his

supremacy over princes, and to promote the interest of that church. The revenues of these monks do not fall short of £200,000,000 sterling, besides the casual profits arising from offerings, and the people's bounty to the church, who are taught that their salvation depends upon this kind of benevolence. In Spain alone, the number of ecclesiastics, including the parochial clergy, monks, nuns, syndics, inquisitors, &c., amounts to 188,625. The number of archbishops is eight, and of bishoprics, forty-six. The archbishop of Toledo alone has a revenue which, according to the most moderate calculation, amounts to £90,000 annually. In Portugal, in 1732, there were reckoned above 300,000 ecclesiastics out of a population of less than two millions. The Patriarch of Lisbon has an annual revenue of £30,000, and the revenue of the Patriarchal Church, above £114,000 sterling per annum. It is stated by Mr. Locke, in a Diary of his travels when on the Continent, inserted in Lord King's late biography of that illustrious philosopher, that the expense of the ecclesiastical establishment of France, at the period in which he resided in that country, amounted to above twenty-four millions of pounds sterling. What, then, must have been the immense treasures of wealth collected by the extortions of the Roman pontiffs and bishops prior to the Reformation, when the whole of the European nations lay prostrate at their feet, and were subservient to their interests,—and when the newly discovered countries in America were plundered to augment their revenues, and to gratify their unbounded rapacity! The wealth thus amassed, might have been almost sufficient to have cultivated every region, and to have transformed every portion of the globe into an earthly paradise.

Even in *England*, during the reign of Papal tyranny, the avarice of the clergy seems to have risen to an enormous height. Mr. Hume, in his history of the reign of Henry III. of England, gives the following description:— "Every thing was become venal in the Romish tribunals; simony was openly practised; no favours, and even no justice could be obtained without a bribe; the highest bidder was sure to have the preference, without regard

either to the merits of the person or of the cause; and besides the usual perversions of rights and the decision of controversies, the Pope openly assumed an absolute and uncontrolled authority of setting aside, by the plenitude of his Apostolic power, all particular rules and all privileges of patrons, churches, and convents. On pretence of remedying these abuses, Pope Honorius, in 1226, complaining of the poverty of his see as the source of all grievances, demanded from every cathedral two of the best prebends, and from every convent two monks' portions, to be set apart as a perpetual and settled revenue of the papal crown; but all men being sensible that the revenue would continue forever, his demand was unanimously rejected. About three years after, the Pope demanded and obtained the tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues, which he levied in a very oppressive manner, requiring payment before the clergy had drawn their rents or tithes, and sending about usurers who advanced them the money at exorbitant interest. In the year 1240, Otho the legate, having in vain attempted the clergy in a body, obtained separately, by intrigues and menaces, large sums from the prelates and convents, and on his departure, is said to have carried more money out of the kingdom than he left in it. This experiment was renewed after four years with success by Martin, the nuncio, who brought from Rome powers of suspending and excommunicating all clergymen that refused to comply with his demands. Meanwhile all the chief benefices of the kingdom were bestowed on Italians; non-residence and pluralities were carried to an enormous height; Mansel, the king's chaplain, is computed to have held at once seven hundred ecclesiastical livings, and the abuses became so evident as to be palpable to the blindness of superstition itself." "The benefices of the Italian clergy, in England, were estimated at the amount of 60,000 marks a year, a sum which exceeded the annual revenue of the Crown itself." "Pope Innocent exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices, the twentieth of all ecclesiastical revenues without exception, the third of such as exceeded 100 marks a year, and the half of such as were possessed by non-residents

He claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen; he pretended a right to inherit all money gotten by usury; he levied benevolencies upon the people; and when the king prohibited these exactions, he threatened to pronounce against him the sentence of excommunication." Such was the boundless rapacity of the Popes, the extravagant exactions they enforced, and the power they wielded to gratify their avaricious desires. There is, perhaps, not a similar instance to be found in the history of man, in any nation on the face of the globe, of Covetousness, under the mask of religion, so impudent, unbounded, and extravagant.

There is a certain class of persons connected with the Romish Church, who have been more arrogant and rapacious than almost any other class, except the pontiffs, namely, those individuals commonly designated by the title of "The Pope's *Nephews*." An Italian writer of the 17th century, who appears to have been a moderate Catholic, when sketching the characters of the existing cardinals, and the Pope's Nephews, relates, among other curious and melancholy pieces of history, the following circumstance: "A friend of mine had the curiosity to calculate the money that has been given to the Nephews, and he began at the year 1500, and, after a great deal of pains, he found issuing from the treasury of the church above *seventy millions of double ducats*,* all delivered into the hands of their kindred: And this is to be understood of *visible* moneys; for of private and invisible sums, there may perhaps be twenty millions more. And those *Romans* that are within the town, and have more time to cast up what has been extorted from them, if they would take the pains to examine it more strictly, I am satisfied, would find it much more." The author, like a good and zealous

* A ducat is about 4s. 6d. or 5s. in value, when of silver, and twice as much when of gold. The *double ducats* of Venice, Florence, Genoa, &c., weigh five pennyweights, seventeen grains of gold, and consequently are about the value of an English guinea, so that the above sum may be considered as equivalent to £73,500,000 sterling, which is equivalent to more than 200 millions of pounds at the present time.

Catholic, makes the following reflection on this fact: "If these seventy millions of double ducats had been spent in persecuting heretics, or in making war upon infidels, where would any infidels be? where would any heretics be? Those seventy millions would have been enough to have overrun all Asia. And (which is of importance too) the princes would have contributed as much more, had they seen the Popes more tenacious against their kindred, and more free to the soldiers who were fighting for Christ." The same author states, that "Innocent the tenth, to satisfy the fancy of a *Kinswoman*, spent *a hundred thousand crowns* upon a fountain; yet with great difficulty could scarce find forty thousand to supply the Emperor in his wars with the Protestants," and "This good Pope would nevertheless leave to his cousin, to the house of *Pamphilia*, and other houses allied to that, above *eight millions of crowns*, with which sum they flourish in Rome to this very day." Again, "The *Barbarini* were in Rome at the same time, and enjoyed a rent of *four hundred thousand crowns;* and yet in a war of so much importance to the Catholic religion, they could not find forty thousand. But, oh God! (I speak it with tears in my eyes) against the most Catholic princes of Italy, *whole millions* were nothing; they could turn the Cross into a sword to revenge their particular injuries; but in the relief of the Emperor, who was vindicating the Christian faith, they could not find so much as a few hundreds." On such circumstances he makes the following remarks: "The infidels laugh, and the heretics rejoice to see the wealth of the Church so irreligiously devoured, while the poor Christian weeps at their merriment." "The heat and passion which the Popes show hourly for their Nephews—to gain Principalities for them, to bestow pension upon pension upon them, to build palace upon palace for them, and to fill their coffers with treasure to the brim, is that which cools the resolution of the zealousest prince, and exasperates the infidels in their wicked designs. A great shame it is, indeed, that the heretics should have more ground to accuse the Catholics, than the Catholic has to impeach the heretic." I shall only extract farther the following apostrophe of the author,

in reference to this subject: "Oh God! to what purpose will they keep so many jewels at *Loretta*, so much consecrated plate at *Rome*, so many abbeys for their Nephews, so much wealth for the Popes, if abandoning their commonwealth, and refusing it that humane supply that is necessary for the celestial glory, it be constrained to submit to the *Ottoman* power which threatens it now with the greatest effect? If the wealth of the Popes be devoured, the benefices of the cardinals given to the priest of *Mahomet*, the abbeys of the Nephews usurped by the Turks, the sacred vessels at Rome profaned by these Infidels, and the seraglio adorned with the gems of Loretta; God grant my eyes may never see that spectacle!"*

Thus it appears, even from the testimony of Roman Catholic writers, that immense sums were wrested from the "Christian people," by every species of fraud and extortion; that these sums, instead of being applied to the maintenance and defence of the Church, as was pretended, were wasting in luxury and extravagance, in selfish gratifications, in riot and debauchery, in accumulating wealth on the heads of their relatives and favourites,—most of whom were infidels and debauchees, in gratifying the pride and avarice of courtezans, and in the most romantic and ambitious projects. The single structure of St. Peter's at Rome, cost the enormous sum of *twelve millions* of pounds; and, in our age and country, would have cost at least thirty-six millions of pounds sterling. What, then, must have been the immense sums expended on similar objects, intended merely for worldly ostentation, throughout the whole of Christendom, besides the millions wasted in the pursuits of tyranny, sensuality and debauchery! The mind of a reflecting Christian is almost overwhelmed at the thought that such sacrilegious enormities should have been so long permitted to continue under the moral government of God; and that such

* See a folio volume of 330 pages, entitled "*Il Cardinalismo di sancta Chiesa;* or the History of the Cardinals of the Romish Church, from the time of their first creation to the election of Pope Clement the ninth. Written in Italian, by the author of *Nepotismo di Roma.* London, 1670.

treasures should have been consecrated, for so many ages, to the support of the kingdom of darkness, while the true Church of Christ was obliged to pine away in poverty, and hide its head in dens and caves of the earth. But such are the deplorable and overwhelming effects of *Covetousness*, when it gains an ascendency in the minds of individuals, communities, or nations. To accomplish its objects, every dictate of prudence is discarded, every law, human and divine, trampled under foot, every ordinance of religion violated and profaned, every threatening of future punishment set at nought, the happiness or misery of fellow-creatures entirely disregarded, atrocious murders perpetrated without remorse, and, in its boundless projects, the whole earth appears too narrow a field for the scene of its devastations.

Let us now attend to the operations of Covetousness as it appears *in individuals and societies connected with* PROTESTANT *and Evangelical Churches.*

The operation of this affection among professing Christians in general, is apparent, *from the eagerness and restless activity with which the acquisition of wealth is prosecuted.* Diligence and activity in business is the duty of every man; and he who, in this way, "provides not for his household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But the keenness and unwearied exertion so frequently displayed in the accumulation of wealth, are very different and ought to be distinguished from that dutiful attention which every man ought to exercise in procuring the means of comfortable subsistence. When we look around us on the world, and even on the conduct of many Christians, one would be almost apt to conclude, that the acquisition of riches and honours is the great object of pursuit, and the ultimate end of human existence. For men will make sacrifices, and expose themselves to inconvenience, privations, and dangers, to acquire money, which they would refuse to do, in order to supply the wants of a poor and afflicted family, or to promote the best interests of an immortal soul, even when there is no necessity for accumulating wealth in

order to family comfort. This disposition likewise appears, *in being unsatisfied with the wealth already acquired, even when every sensitive comfort consistent with reason and religion is already enjoyed.* There is too much aiming at what is called *independence*—a want of *contentment* under the present allotments of Providence, and a DISTRUST of the *care* and the *promises* of Him who has said, "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure," and "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." How few are there to be found, even among evangelical Christians, whose language and conduct declare,—"We are perfectly contented with the arrangements of the Almighty, and with that portion of earthly good which he has bestowed upon us, and we confidently trust that in the use of all proper means, he will cause 'goodness and mercy to follow us all the days of our lives;' for all his allotments are determined by Infinite wisdom and rectitude!" The same disposition appears *in refusing to contribute to philanthropic objects*, or in contributing *the smallest and most trifling sums.* While large sums are unnecessarily expended in expensive articles of dress and furniture, the most pitiful and niggardly sums are sometimes reluctantly given for the promotion of objects which have for their ultimate end the alleviation of human misery, the diffusion of divine knowledge, and the renovation of the world. But, leaving such general observations, it may be expedient to descend into particulars, and fix our attention for a little, on some of the more prominent modes by which covetous affections are manifested by professing Christians.

Covetousness assumes an immense variety of different shapes, and manifests itself in such a multiplicity of modes, that it would require volumes of description, were we to trace it in all its turnings and windings, and the diversity of phases in which it appears in different individuals, and throughout the ramifications of Christian society; and therefore I shall confine myself to some of its more general or leading aspects.

1. It appears in its most abject and degrading form *in*

the practice of HOARDING *money and acquiring houses and lands* for the mere purpose of *accumulation*, when there is no intention of enjoying such wealth, or bringing it forward for the good of society. A man who is under the influence of this vile propensity will sometimes exhibit an apparent decency and respectability of conduct to general society. He will seldom be distinguished for gluttony, drunkenness, or debauchery; for such indulgences run counter to his love of gain and his hoarding propensities. He will even attend with punctuality on the public ordinances of religion, and, for the sake of character, will give his half-penny or his penny to the collections for the poor, and will likewise keep up a routine of family worship in private, because it costs him nothing. Among his neighbours he may enjoy the reputation of being a sober, industrious and frugal character, and be set in contrast with the profligate and the profane. But all the while his heart is set upon his covetousness. To acquire money by every mean that will not subject him to the criminal laws, and to place it in security, are the great and ultimate objects of his pursuit; his whole affections are absorbed in the accumulation of wealth; mammon is the great idol which he adores; and whatever semblance of religion he may assume, he worships and serve the *creature* more than the Creator. He is hard and griping in every bargain he makes; he grinds the faces of the poor, and refuses to relieve the wants of the needy; his weights and measures are frequently found deficient, and he cheats without remorse, if he can pass without detection. He envies the man who is richer or more prosperous than himself, and he casts his eyes around him on the possessions of the poor, if perchance, by cunning and deceit, he may acquire them at half their value. However fast his wealth may increase, "though he heap up silver as the dust," and "the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks," his wishes are never satisfied, and his accumulated wealth always lags behind his avaricious desires. He thinks he has a right to be rich, and he murmurs against the dispensations of Providence when they frustrate his schemes and disappoint his expect

ations. He is unhappy, because he is unsatisfied with what he has acquired, and because his plans for accumulating gain are so frequently disconcerted. Gratitude to God and reliance on his providential care, tenderness, sympathy, and kindness, domestic affection, and expansive beneficence, are virtues which can never find an entrance to his heart; for all the avenues to true enjoyment are interrupted, and closely shut up by the cold hand of avarice. He denies himself those sensitive comforts which Providence has put within his reach, and almost starves himself in the midst of riches and plenty. He stints the comforts of his family and dependants, imparting to them the necessaries of life in shreds and crumbs, and stooping to the meanest and most debasing expedients, in order to save a shilling or to increase his store—days and years roll on and carry him near to the verge of time. As he approaches nearer the grave, into which his riches cannot descend, his desires after them still increase, and he clings to them with a more eager grasp. His last sickness seizes him while he is counting his gold, arranging his bills, collecting his rents, or prosecuting the poor debtors who have come under his grasp. He is determined to hold fast his treasures till the last moment; even the near prospect of dissolution is insufficient to make his heart relent over a poor family whom he is hurrying into ruin, and in the very article of death, his heart is glued to earthly treasures, in spite of every remonstrance; sometimes grasping the keys of his coffers with a desperate resolution, till, at length, his soul takes its downward flight to that world for which it is prepared.

Such is a faint picture of the covetous man who "lays up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God." Such is the character, more or less deeply marked, of not a few who pass under the Christian name, and have a place in the Christian church. When they are dextrous in the exercise of cunning and deceit, and their conduct is unmarked with any *flagrant* vice, they may long continue their course without much reprobation from general and even Christian society, especially if they have acquir

ed the habit of dissimulation and hypocritical canting. But the principle which pervades the souls of such persons, if permitted to operate without control, would display itself in a still more glaring and disgustful manner,—of which we have many examples recorded in biography and history. In order to exhibit covetousness in its real light, and to impress the mind with the baseness and revolting nature of this passion, it may not be improper to select two or three examples.

Edward Nokes was by trade a tinker, at Horn-church in Essex. His apartments portrayed symptoms of the most abject poverty, though, at his death, he was found to be possessed of between five and six thousand pounds. He had a wife and several children whom he brought up in the most parsimonious manner, often feeding them on grains and offals of meat which he purchased at reduced prices. In order to save the expense of shaving, he would encourage the dirt to gather on his face, to hide in some measure this defect. He never suffered his shirt to be washed in water, but after wearing it till it became intolerably black, he used to wash it in wine to save the expense of soap. His coat, which time had transformed into a jacket, would have puzzled the most accomplished chemist to determine its original colour, so covered was it with shreds and patches of different colours, and those so diversified as to resemble the trophies of the different nations of Europe. The interest of his money, together with all he could heap up, he used to deposit in a bag, which bag was covered up in a tin pot, and then conveyed to a brick kitchen where one of the bricks was taken up, and a hole made just large enough to hold the pot; the brick was then carefully marked, and a tally kept behind the door, of the sum deposited. One day his wife discovered the hoard, and took from the pot one of 16 guineas that were placed therein; but when her husband came to count his money, on finding it not to agree with the tally, behind the door, which his wife did not know of, he taxed her with the theft, and to the day of his death —even on *his death bed*, he never spoke to her, without adding the epithet "*thief*" to every expression. A short

time before his death he gave strict charge that his coffin should not have a nail in it, which was actually the case, the lid being fastened with hinges made of cords. His shroud was made of a pound of wool, the coffin was covered with a sheet instead of a pall, and was carried by six men, to each of whom he left half a crown. At his particular desire, no one who followed him to the grave wore mourning; even the undertaker was habited in a blue coat and scarlet waistcoat. He died in 1802, a wretched example of the degrading effects of avarice.

In November, 1821, a person of the name of Harrison died in Bennet street, Rathbone place, Oxford road, London, where he had lodged 20 years. The furniture in his room consisted of one old chair, a table, an old stump bedstead, and a bed of straw; in one corner was a heap of ashes; and the cupboard, the day after his decease, contained a few potatoe peelings and a stale roll. His body presented a picture of extreme misery and starvation, though he had no family, and had property in the funds to the amount of £1500. A female friend who was in the habit of visiting him, deposed before the Coroner, that he would let no person but her enter his room, which he always kept padlocked on the inside, for fear of being robbed. He lay on his bed in the day time, and sat up at night without any fire, always burning a lamp. A few evenings before his death, he told her, that many persons wanted to finger his cash, but they should not. He then desired her to lock him in, and take the key with her, which she did; but on going again next day, she found him lying on his bed, with his clothes on, quite dead. He was in the practice of carrying large sums of money, and sewing them up in different parts of his clothes, for which reason he never pulled them off. Upwards of £100 was found upon him at the time of his death;—on the night previous to which he sent for one oyster, half a pint of beer, and a pennyworth of figs, which he ate. Such is the wretchedness and degradation to which covetousness reduces those miserable beings who live under its influence. Such examples form a striking commentary on the words of Solomon:—"There is a sore evil, which

I have seen under the sun; riches kept by the owners thereof to their hurt, and those riches perish by evil travail. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand. All his days also he eateth in darkness, 'or wretchedness,' and hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness" under the curse and displeasure of God.

Numerous examples of this kind might be brought forward; but I shall adduce only the following well authenticated instance, in relation to John Elwes, Esq., who was for some time a member of parliament for Berkshire.

The father of this gentleman was a brewer, of great eminence, but his mother, though she was left nearly £100,000 by her husband, literally starved herself to death. About the age of 40, Mr. Elwes succeeded to the property of his uncle, which amounted to no less than £250,000. Yet this wretched man, notwithstanding his immense wealth, denied himself of almost every comfort, in order to increase his store. He would walk home in the rain in London, rather than pay a shilling for a coach; he would sit in wet clothes sooner than have fire to dry them; he would eat his provisions in the last stage of putrefaction, sooner than have a fresh joint from the butchers; and he wore a wig for a certain time, which his biographer saw him pick up out of a rut in a lane where they were riding; which had all the appearance of the cast-off wig of some beggar. When setting out on a journey, his first care was to put two or three eggs, boiled hard, into his great-coat pocket, or any scraps of bread which he found; then mounting his horse, his next attention was to get out of London into that road where turnpikes were the fewest; then stopping under any hedge whose grass presented stuff for his horse, and a little water for himself, he would sit down and refresh himself and his horse together, without ever once stopping on the road at any house. Two of his residences he chiefly visited were, Marcham in Suffolk, and another in Berkshire. Marcham was the place he most frequently visited

as he advanced in life; for this reason, that the journey into Suffolk cost him only two pence halfpenny, while that into Berkshire amounted to *four pence*. To save fire he would walk about the remains of an old green-house, or sit with a servant in the kitchen. During the harvest, he would go into the fields to glean the corn on the grounds of his own tenants, and they used to leave a little more than common, to please the old gentleman, who was as eager after it as any pauper in the parish. In the advance of the season, his morning employment was to pick up any stray chips, bones, or other things, to carry to the fire in his pocket; and he was one day surprised by a neighbouring gentleman, in the act of pulling down, with some difficulty, a crow's nest for this purpose. On the gentleman wondering why he would give himself this trouble, "Oh! sir," he replied, "it is really a shame that these creatures should do so. Do but see what a waste they make—they don't care how extravagant they are."

As he approached to the close of life, his avaricious disposition increased, and his penurious habits became still more inveterate. He used still to ride about the country on one of his mares, but he rode her on the soft turf, adjoining the road, to save the expense of shoes, as he observed, "the turf is very pleasant for a horse's foot." When any gentleman called to pay him a visit, and the stable-boy was profuse enough to put a little hay before the horse, old Elwes would slyly steal back into the stable, and take the hay very carefully away. He would continue to eat game in the last state of putrefaction, and meat that *walked about his plate*, rather than have new things killed before the old provision was finished—a species of provisions not altogether unsuitable to so degraded a mind. During this period, he one day dined upon the remaining part of a moor-hen, which had been brought out of the river by a rat; and soon after ate an undigested part of a pike, which a larger one had swallowed, but had not finished, and which were taken in this state in a net—remarking to a friend with a kind of satisfaction, "Ay! this is killing two birds with one stone." It is supposed that if his manors and some grounds in his own

hands had not furnished a subsistence, where he had not any thing *actually to buy*, he would have suffered himself to have starved rather than have *bought any thing with money*. His *dress* was in unison with his mode of living. He would walk about in a tattered brown-coloured hat, and sometimes in a red and white coloured cap, like a prisoner confined for debt. His shoes he would never suffer to be cleaned, lest they should be worn out the sooner; but still, with all this *self-denial*, he thought he was too profuse, and would frequently say, "he must be a little more careful of his property." His disquietude on the subject of money was now continual. When he went to bed, he would put five or six guineas into a bureau, and then feel of his money, after he had retired to rest, and sometimes in the middle of the night, he would come down to see if it was there. *Money* was now his only thought; he rose upon money—upon money lay down to rest. He would carefully wrap up a few guineas, in various papers, and deposit them in different corners, and then run from one to the other, to see whether they were all safe; then forgetting where he had concealed some of them, he would become as seriously afflicted as a man might be who had lost all his property. During the last winter of his life, he would frequently be heard at midnight, as if struggling with some one in his chamber, and crying out, "I will keep my money; I will; nobody shall rob me of my property." At length, on the 26th November, 1789, expired this miserably rich man, while absorbed in his avaricious propensities, leaving to the world a most striking and melancholy example of the miserable and debasing effects of covetousness. At his death, his property amounted to above *eight hundred thousand pounds*, which were soon dispersed throughout all parts of England.*

Such examples may be considered as intended by Divine Providence to show us the wretched and degraded condition to which avarice reduces the soul of man, and to serve as beacons to guard us against the influence of

* Selected from Topham's "Life of John Elwes, Esq."

this debasing and soul-ruining propensity. For it is impossible for a soul thus absorbed in the accumulation of money to love its Creator or its fellow-creatures, or to submit to the requisitions of the gospel; and consequently it must be altogether unfit for engaging in the sublime exercises of the heavenly world, and for relishing the enjoyments of that "inheritance which is incorruptible and that fadeth not away." The service of God and Mammon are absolutely irreconcilable; and the man who devotes himself to the latter, by his own act renders himself *unfit* for being a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Than such a man there can scarcely be presented a more pitiable picture of human depravity and degradation. An immortal mind grovelling in the dust, and having for its highest aim to heap up treasures which are never to be enjoyed! and despising those incorruptible riches which shall endure forever! what folly can be compared to the conduct of such an infatuated mortal?

> "Oh, cursed lust of Gold! when for thy sake
> The fool throws up his interest in both worlds;
> First *starved* in this, then *damned* in that to come."

Who that ever tasted the pleasures of knowledge, or felt the sweets of beneficence, or the comforts of religion, can but pity the poor wretch whose soul is chained to earthly treasures, and tortured on the rack of avarice? And, let it be remembered, that although the examples related above are extreme cases, yet the principle of covetousness is the same in every individual in whose heart it predominates, and it is owing only to certain restraining circumstances, that it does not carry them to the same stage of misery and degradation, as in the instances I have now related. Let this depraved principle be let loose to operate without control, and it is impossible to depict the miseries and degradations of human character that would follow in its train. The world would soon become an immense *aceldama*, and its inhabitants a society of fiends, fit only to be the companions of the prince of darkness, and his infernal legions.

2. Another way in which Covetousness operates, even among professed Christians, is, *in gratifying a desire for ostentatious display, and a spirit of pride and ambition.*

The Creator evidently intended that his creatures should be suitably clothed and accommodated with comfortable habitations; for he has replenished the earth with every thing requisite for those purposes; and were proper arrangements made in the social state, and benevolence as frequently displayed as the principle of avarice—all the ranks of mankind would be comfortably clothed, and conveniently accommodated. A spirit of covetousness is not necessarily connected with a desire after decent apparel and comfortable dwellings, nor with those exertions which are requisite to procure them. But when I behold a professed Christian decking himself and family with gaudy attire, replenishing his dwelling with the most expensive furniture, erecting a huge mansion, superior to those of all his neighbours, and sufficient to accommodate three or four families—contenting himself at the same time with subscribing half a guinea a year for a religious or philanthropic institution, and so eagerly engaged in the pursuit of wealth, that time is scarcely left for mental improvement or family religion—I cannot help drawing the conclusion, that covetousness is a principle which rules in such a mind for the purpose of fostering a spirit of vanity and pride, and a desire for worldly ostentation and parade. I have seen in the house of a professor of religion, whose income did not exceed £150 a year, an article of furniture, of no great utility, which cost twenty or thirty guineas, while a sixth part of this sum would have been sufficient to have procured a neat article to have answered every purpose for which it was intended. Yet if the individual had been urged to subscribe a guinea for a benevolent institution, it would have been refused as a most extravagant demand. I have seen a single flat of a house furnished, at an expense of seven or eight hundred guineas, where there was scarcely a family to occupy it, and where the proprietor, in all probability, never gave the tenth part of this sum to the purposes of

religion or human improvement. Without calling in question the right of those to whom God hath given wealth and riches, to adorn their mansions with splendid furniture or decorations, it may still be proper to enquire, if the paltry sum generally given by many such persons for the purposes of philanthropy, be at all proportionable to the expenses incurred in procuring such costly articles and decorations. Is it the part of a Christian man to be so liberal and even extravagant in his external trappings, while he can scarcely be induced to put his hand into his pocket to supply the means of propagating the gospel through the world,—and while the one half of his superfluities would be hailed as a precious boon for this purpose? To such persons we might apply the words of the prophet Haggai, "Is it time for you, O ye," fashionable Christians, "to dwell in your decorated houses, and this house of the Lord lie waste? Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways. Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is no warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put them in a bag full of holes." In the course of his providence, God frequently causes such persons to behold their sin in their punishment, by blasting their hopes of worldly gain, and sweeping away their treasures by unforeseen accidents and adverse dispensations. Such was the case in the days of Haggai, when the people refused to exert themselves in rebuilding the temple. "Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and, when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of Hosts; because of mine house which is waste; and ye run every man unto his own house." With how much propriety may such declarations be applied to many religionists in our times, when there are so many urgent calls to arise and build the New Testament Church, and extend its boundaries—and who yet run every one to his "decorated houses," to indulge in ease and luxury, while the extension of the house of God and the reparation of its desolations require their most vigorous exertions? The money which is wasted in unnecessary decorations,

in regard to dress and furniture, and other superfluities, even by Christians—were it collected into one sum, would amount to far more than the whole of the funds belonging to all the Religious and Philanthropic institutions of the British Empire, and may be considered as nothing less than a robbery of the Most High of his "titles and offerings."

3. Covetousness manifests itself *under pretence of providing suitable portions for children.*

This is a very common apology for the keen prosecution of wealth, and the anxious care which is exercised in securing it. In most instances, however, it is nothing more than a cloak to cover the vile principle of covetousness, when it is beginning to sway its sceptre over the mind. But, supposing a regard for the temporal interests of children to mingle itself with a covetous affection, the practice of laying up fortunes for children, so as to make them independent, is both injudicious, and immoral in its general tendency. Every parent ought to give his children a good education, so far as in his power, and above all things, "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." So far as his circumstances permit, he should indulge them in every innocent enjoyment; and when they are beginning business or setting up in life, he may afford them as much money as he can spare for enabling them to conduct, with success, the professions or employments in which they engage. This is nearly all that a Christian parent should be anxious to accomplish, in reference to the temporal condition of his children. For, when a young man has received an education suitable to his station, and adequate allowance for the commencement and prosecution of his business, and is, at the same time, given to understand that the whole of his future happiness and success in life will depend upon his own prudence, exertions and moral conduct,—he will more readily apply the powers of his mind to his profession, and attend to the dictates of prudence, than if he had a constant dependence on the wealth and support of

his parents, whatever conduct he might pursue. Every young person should be taught that he has a certain part to act in the world, for which he is accountable to the Great Lord of all — that his happiness or misery in this world, (under God,) is dependent upon himself and the course he pursues—that he ought not to live merely for the gratification of his own humour or pleasure, but for the good of mankind—and that there are certain physical and moral laws which he can never violate without feeling a corresponding punishment.

But, if a parent act on a different principle; if he indulge his covetous disposition for the purpose of enriching his children, and give them reason to expect that they shall inherit wealth and independency, when he shall have left the world, the worst consequences may ensue, both to himself and to his offspring. When children begin to discover that the penurious disposition of their parents is a mean cringing vice, they will be led to conclude that extravagance is a virtue, and thus a broad path will be opened for licentious conduct in the future part of their lives. They are trained up in the idea, that their parents are accumulating a mass of wealth, which they are destined one day to spend, and they live under restraints and privations, which they hope the death of their parents will soon remove. The children of very covetous parents are frequently found in this situation. The old men die, and we immediately behold the children entering on the career of gaiety and licentiousness, and running headlong to poverty and destruction; and, instead of feeling grateful to their parent for the riches he had accumulated, can scarcely conceal their joy, that they are removed from under his restraints. The moment of his death, is the signal for the plunder of his penurious savings. "I never knew the son of a miser," says a certain writer, "either feeling or expressing the least gratitude for the means which his father had employed to amass his fortune. The heir of this kind of wealth receives it as a debt which has been long due, and which has been recovered by a vexatious law-plea. He may dispute the sum, but he will not esteem the person who has prevented him from enjoy

ing it." Many examples, were it expedient, might be produced to illustrate the fact, that the riches of the covetous man, after his death, "make themselves wings and fly away," and that those to whom they are left, too frequently "fall into snares and drown themselves in destruction and perdition."

It is truly astonishing, that so many individuals are to be found, whose faculties are unimpaired, who appear in other respects men of sense, and profess a decent respect for the ordinances of religion, and yet allow the love of money, and the absurd desire of heaping up useless wealth, to triumph over every rational and religious principle. When we speak to them on the subject, they attempt to silence every argument by expatiating on the necessity of providing for their children, as if they wished to prove that *money* is a better provision than training them in intelligence, and in moral and religious habits, and in rendering them meet to be heirs of a blessed immortality. Now, even in a temporal point of view, nothing can be more injurious to a young man, than to leave him such a portion of wealth as will render him, in the language of the world, *independent*, especially if he have little relish for rational and religious pursuits. He has no stimulus for cultivating his intellectual and moral powers; his time frequently lies heavy on his hands; to promote the physical or moral comfort of others, forms no part of his plan; his faculties become benumbed; he becomes a prey to the crafty and licentious; he wanders about from one place to another, and from one pleasure to another, without any defined object in view, but the gratification of his humours; he feels, on the whole, but little enjoyment, for this is only to be found in mental and bodily activity; he gives up at length to licentious habits and sensual indulgencies; his resources begin to be diminished—he feels pecuniary embarrassments; his pleasures are interrupted, and his miseries increase; and thus he passes through life in a fretful humour, without rational enjoyment, and without contributing to the good of others. Such is too frequently the case with the children of those who have worn themselves out in avaricious activity, and deprived themselves

of almost every comfort, in order to lay up an inheritance for their offspring.

Every young man, even the son of a nobleman, should be taught that he is placed in a scene of *action*, as well as of enjoyment; that, to contribute to the good of society, ought to be one main object of his life; and, that although he may not need to earn his subsistence by the labour either of his hands or of his mind—he ought to engage in some honourable pursuit, which may tend to promote his own happiness, the improvement of society, and the glory of his Maker. Even the sons of the most opulent ought not to consider it as a degradation to learn a mechanical employment, and to apply their corporeal powers, occasionally, to useful industry. Among many other advantages, it might tend to strengthen their animal system, to invigorate their minds, and to enable them to form a judicious estimate of the value of mechanical inventions, and of the employments and intercourses of general society. And their earnings might become a source of wealth for carrying forward improvements, and adding spirit and vigour to every philanthropic movement. With regard to the *female* members of a family; if a parent have any wealth or inheritance to leave, the greater part should be bestowed on them, as they are neither so well adapted by Nature for active labour, nor have the same opportunities as the male branches, for engaging in business and increasing their store. Yet, even the female sex, in the higher ranks, ought not to consider themselves as exempted from any labours to which they are competent, and in which they may promote the best interests of mankind. In short, it may be laid down as a kind of maxim, that a great fortune bestowed upon a young man is one of the greatest evils that can befal him, unless he make it one of his great objects to devote a considerable portion of it to the good of society; and, that *labour,* both of body and mind, is *essential* to the true happiness of man.

4. Covetousness displays itself on an extensive scale, and in an innumerable variety of modes—*in the various mercantile transactions of mankind.*

It would be impossible to describe all the variety of manœuvres by which covetousness is, in this way, displayed, even by multitudes who consider themselves as followers of Christ; and, therefore, I shall only glance at some of the nefarious means which are frequently employed. Among other well-known practices, are the following: varnishing over deteriorated articles with a fair outside, in order to deceive the purchaser, and to prevent the real state of the commodity from being perceived. Hence, a pound of butter has frequently been found with a quantity of Scotch porridge in its interior; milk mixed with chalk and water; sugar mixed with white sand; the under part of a chest of tea of an inferior quality to that of the top; and many such frauds and deceptions, best known to the nefarious trader. Other practices are, taking advantage of *ignorance* to pass off an unsaleable commodity, and asking more than the just value of whatever is offered for sale; in a merchant denying the goods which he has in his possession, when there is the prospect of an advancing price; in his overcharging for the articles of which he is disposing, and undervaluing those he intends to purchase; in using light weights and deficient measures, when there is little prospect of their being detected; in the jealousies, slanders, and evil surmising which one trader harbours, and endeavours slyly to throw out against another; in their attempts to extol their own articles beyond their just value, and to depreciate the characters and the commodities of their neighbours; in their engaging in *smuggling* and other unchristian modes of traffic; in taking advantage of the necessities of the poor and unfortunate, in order to procure their goods at half their value; in selling spiritous liquors to the worthless and dissipated, whether men, women, or children, to swell the list of "transgressors among men," merely for the sake of the paltry profit of such a traffic; in trafficking in *wind-bills*, bribing the officers of justice for the liberty of continuing a nefarious trade, and in a thousand other modes which the fraudulent dealer alone is best qualified to describe. In all such transactions, not only is covetousness displayed, but a principle of *falsehood* runs through

all his mercantile negotiations, so that every fraudulent trader is of necessity *a systematic liar.*

I have known high-flying professors of religion guilty of most of the frauds to which I now allude. I have known a merchant, an office-bearer in a Christian church, who, by a dexterous mode of measuring his cloth, kept off nearly an inch from every yard, and who charged a higher price for his commodities than any of his neighbours; another of the same pretensions, who seemed to consider himself as holier than others, who possessed a considerable quantity of wealth along with a good business, and who could, notwithstanding, degrade himself and gratify his avarice, by selling drams and gills of whiskey and gin over his counter, to dissipated women, and all others who chose to be his customers. I have seen such practices in the shop even of the mayor of a large town, who was also a distinguished member of the church. I have known others of similar religious pretensions, who have engaged in smuggling spiritous liquors, paper, teas, and other commodities, who have even forged excise stamps, and who seemed to consider such practices as nowise inconsistent with the principles of Christianity. I have known such whose weights and measures were deficient, whose quartern loaves were from five to ten ounces below the just standard, and whose butter, when exposed to sale in the public market, has been frequently seized by police officers, on account of its deficiency in weight. I have seen the confidence of their brethren in this way grossly abused by their assumed character of piety and rectitude, and have been sometimes tempted to suspect the honour and honesty of every one who made high pretensions to sanctity and evangelical religion. Yet many such nefarious practices are overlooked in Christian churches, as scarcely worthy of censure, especially if the guilty individuals have a large share of wealth, and regularly attend the public ordinances of religion. Were it expedient in the present case, numerous examples of the above description might be brought forward.

Another way in which merchants display their covetous disposition is, *by toiling their apprentices and servants*

and confining them for so many long hours, that their health is injured, and their intellectual and religious improvement prevented. I have known apprentices not above thirteen years of age, confined in shops from seven in the morning till twelve at midnight, and sometimes to an early hour in the morning, and having scarcely two hours out of the twenty-four allotted them for meals; and that, too, by merchants who made a splendid profession of piety, and were considered as pillars of Dissenting churches. By such conduct, young persons are not only deprived of that recreation which is necessary to the vigour of their animal system, but prevented from attending the means of moral and religious instruction, and from storing their minds with that knowledge which they ought to possess as rational and immortal beings. If, in the present state of things, merchants and others require so long continued drudgery from their servants, other arrangements ought to be made, and additional servants or apprentices procured, so that a moderate and reasonable service only should be required from them. But such arrangements would run counter to the principle of avarice. Similar practices have long been complained of in regard to many of our spinning-mills, and other public manufactories, and yet they have been defended by *Christian* men, as if the labouring classes were to be considered in no other light than as mere animal machines, or as beasts of burden. Covetousness likewise displays itself in keeping open shops to late hours, and thus preventing families, servants, shopmen, and apprentices from domestic enjoyment, and from the means of rational improvement; and, when measures have been concerted to put a stop to this evil, I have known two or three professed Christians, by their obstinacy and avaricious disposition, disconcert every plan which had been formed for this purpose.

5. The covetous principle, conjoined with glaring acts of inhumanity and injustice, is frequently displayed *in cases of* Bankruptcy.

How frequently do we find persons establishing an ex-

tensive business on credit when they have no funds of their own; using wind-bills and sometimes forgeries; furnishing elegant houses with money which is not their own; living in luxury and splendour; dashing along in gigs and landaus; entertaining friends with sumptuous dinners, and indulging in all the fashionable follies of life, till, in the course of two or three years, they are run aground and declared to be *Bankrupts*, who can scarcely pay a dividend of three shillings a pound. Previous to such bankruptcies, many cases of fraud and injustice very frequently occur. I have known office-bearers in Christian churches, distinguished for their high pretensions to religion and piety, who, only a few days previous to their failure in business, have borrowed pretty large sums of money, and that, too, even from an industrious mechanic, who was induced, by deceitful words, to lend the whole of what he had accumulated by industry and economy, during a course of many years,—scarcely a fraction of which was ever recovered. In such cases, we not unfrequently behold selfishness assuming a vast variety of forms; practising low cunning and dishonesty, resorting to all possible shifts of duplicity, to prolong the credit of a tottering establishment; concealing property which belonged to others, or secretly disposing of it at half its value; dealing in contraband articles, defrauding government of its revenues, deceiving the unwary, weaving a web of entanglement throughout every department of the mercantile concern, gathering up payments of money and merchandise against the crisis which is approaching, and implicating friends and acquaintances, and even the poor industrious labourer in their concerns, and involving them in the impending ruin. If such were the practices merely of professed worldly men, we might cease to wonder. But, alas! such wiles and shufflings and dishonesties, are too frequently displayed by those who profess to be seeking after an incorruptible inheritance.

But the exhibition of covetousness and dishonesty does not end at the period of bankruptcy. After a legal settlement has been obtained, and business resumed, similar

exhibitions are repeated. I have known many individuals, belonging both to the established church and to dissenters, men whose professions of religion were ostentatious and glaring; who, after having become bankrupts, lived as luxuriously, dressed as gaily, gave their children as *fashionable* an education, and set them up in as lucrative professions, as if no such event had taken place. I have known others who, after having paid six or seven shillings on the pound, and been permitted to resume trade, have, in the course of a few years, purchased heritable property to a considerable amount, without ever thinking of restoring to their creditors a single shilling of what they had lost by their bankruptcy. Because they obtained a *settlement* from their creditors, and therefore are not *legally* bound to refund their loss, *therefore*, they imagine that they are under no *moral* obligation to perform such an act of *natural* justice. The cases of this kind which daily occur, are so numerous and striking, that it would be needless to condescend to particular instances. It is little short of a libel on the moral perceptions of general society, and particularly on the Christian world, that a man voluntarily coming forward and settling with his creditors, when he is not legally bound to do so, should be considered as a kind of *phenomenon* in the commercial world, and worthy of being published in every newspaper, when it is nothing more than what a sense of natural justice would, in all cases, obviously dictate. It is true, indeed, that the men of the world seldom consider such cases as I have alluded to, as of a criminal nature; but it is amazing that Christian churches should almost entirely overlook such displays of covetousness and injustice, and inflict no censure on the offenders, notwithstanding the malignant and anti-christian dispositions and practices with which they are associated.

6. There is too frequently a striking display of covetousness *in the case of many of the ministers of religion.*

Not to mention the buying and selling of benefices and other Simoniacal practices, which have long abounded, and which have tended to throw disgrace on the sacred

office; there are many other ways in which worldly-mindedness is manifested by not a few in this class of Christian society. Although I wish to speak with the greatest respect of the ministers of the church, on account of the sanctity and importance of the sacred office, for which no one entertains a higher veneration; yet I cannot shut my eyes to the many examples around me, which prove, that not a few Christian ministers are too much actuated and directed in their movements, by a worldly-minded and avaricious disposition. This propensity is displayed in aspirings, with the utmost keenness, after ecclesiastical dignities and preferments—not for the sake of the *duties* connected with such situations, nor with a view of occupying a field of more extensive usefulness; but for increasing their revenues, and living in opulence and splendour. The general conduct of many to whom I allude, their neglect of the flock over which they have been made overseers, and their indulgence in the fashionable pursuits and amusements of the world, too plainly evince the ruling disposition of their hearts. Would to God that such persons would consider what views they will have of such things, when stretched upon that bed from which they are to rise no more, and about to enter the confines of the eternal world! The pious Mr. Hervey, about four days before his death, when Dr. Stonehouse paid him a visit, and was discoursing on the emptiness of worldly honours to an immortal, and on the unprofitableness of riches to the irreligious, replied, "true, Doctor, true, the only valuable riches are in heaven. What would it avail me now, to be the Archbishop of Canterbury? Disease would show no respect to my mitre. That prelate is not only very great, but I am told, he has religion really at heart. Yet it is godliness, and not grandeur, that will avail him hereafter. The gospel is offered to me, a poor country parson, the same as to his Grace. Oh! why then do ministers thus neglect the charge of so kind a Saviour, fawn upon the great, and hunt after worldly preferments with so much eagerness, to the disgrace of our order? These are the things which render the clergy so justly contemptible to the

worldlings. No wonder the service of our church has become such a formal, lifeless thing, since it is, alas! too generally executed by persons dead to godliness in all their conversation; whose indifference to religion, and wordly-minded behaviour, proclaim the little regard they pay to the doctrines of the Lord, who bought them."

The same covetous propensity is indicated, when a minister leaves an affectionate people, among whom he has a competent support, for a larger and more opulent congregation, where his income will be considerably increased. I have seldom known an instance in which a minister voluntarily left his charge, unless when he had the prospect of a larger stipend. There are doubtless, valid reasons why a minister of the gospel may, with propriety, leave his charge; but if he has previously been in moderately comfortable circumstances, and if the increase of income be the chief or only motive for the change, there is too much reason to suspect, that a covetous disposition has lurked in the breast, and has influenced his decision. Not long ago, a dissenting pastor received a call from a congregation in a large town where he was offered a larger stipend than he had previously received. He was generally beloved by his people, he had received from them handsome presents, as testimonials of their gratitude and affection; he received from them an income adequate to his station, and to the supply of every reasonable want; they pressed him to remain, and promised to do every thing that might promote his comfort. But, for no other reason, apparently, than the prospect of about £50 more being added to his income, he parted with them almost abruptly, and left them to draw the inference, (which they did not hesitate to do,) that he had more regard to his worldly interests than to superintend the spiritual interests of an affectionate people. I am much mistaken if even the temporal happiness of such a person shall be augmented by such conduct; and if God, in the course of his Providence, does not try him with unexpected difficulties, and make him behold his sin in his punishment.

This covetous disposition is likewise displayed by min

isters of the gospel when they take large farms and engage with keenness in the pursuits of agriculture, and when they embark in extensive mercantile concerns and speculations, for the purpose of increasing their fortunes, and enabling them to live in splendour and affluence. It is not long since a dissenting minister was advertised in the newspapers, among the list of bankrupts, as "the Rev. Mr. H——, *Banker* and *Builder*." And, even a Doctor of Divinity, who enjoyed a handsome stipend, and was distinguished as a popular preacher, has been known to have embarked with eagerness in mercantile speculations, connected with shipping affairs, spinning mills, banking, building, and other departments, for the purpose of gratifying a worldly disposition, and enabling him to leave at his death, several thousands of pounds to each member of his family. Another of the same description has been known to engage in extensive agricultural operations, in surveying and superintending roads and acting as factor for neighbouring Squires, in order to hoard up worldly treasures, although his stipend was one of the largest in the country around. Indeed, instances of this description are so far from being uncommon, that they are scarcely considered as inconsistent with the sacred office; and a man, under the influence of such principles, will pass through life with a certain degree of respect from the church and the world, as if he had acted in no way inconsistent with the character of a Christian. In the case of such, the duties of their office generally form only a subordinate object of attention. Another way in which covetousness sometimes manifests itself, especially in the case of dissenting ministers, is—their concealing certain important truths in their public ministrations, and neglecting to apply the principles and precepts of Christianity to the particular cases of every class of gospel-hearers without respect of persons, for fear of offending certain leading individuals of the church, and risking the loss of a portion of emolument. It is likewise manifested in winking at the delinquencies of men of wealth and influence, in cringing to such characters, and attempting to screen them from censure, when

their conduct demands it. In all such cases as those to which I allude, the conduct of a Christian pastor requires to be guided by wisdom and prudence. But when he clearly perceives the path of truth and duty, he ought at once, without fear of consequences, to act on the principle "*Fiat Justitia ruat cælum.*" Let what is accordant with eternal truth and righteousness be performed, although the mighty should rage, the heavens fall, and the elements rush into confusion.

But, in general, it will be found, that he who prudently discharges his duty, trusting for support in the Providence of God, will seldom be left to sink under his difficulties, or to want the means of comfortable support. The conduct of the apostles, in such cases, should be imitated by every Christian minister. When Peter was brought before the Jewish rulers to account for his conduct in healing the impotent man, and preaching the resurrection of Jesus, he boldly declared, "Be it known to ye all, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom *ye* crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even *by him* doth this man stand before you whole. This is the stone that was set at nought of *you* builders, which is become the head of the corner." And when he was commanded to teach no more in the name of Jesus, he replied, with the same fearlessness of consequences; "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto *you* more than unto God, judge ye. For I cannot speak the things which I have seen and heard." And Paul, when he was about to leave the church of Ephesus, could declare, "I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; I have not shunned to declare to you all the council of God: I have coveted no man's gold, nor silver, nor apparel, for these hands have ministered to my necessities. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Were all Christian ministers animated by the spirit which actuated these holy apostles, we should seldom find pastors shrinking from their duty, from the fear of man, or from worldly motives, "shunning to declare the whole

counsel of God." Much less should we ever behold men more careful to fleece their flocks than to feed them with knowledge—and who have the effrontery to receive many hundreds, and even thousands of pounds a year, as Christian ministers appointed to the charge of souls, while yet they spend their incomes in fashionable dissipation in foreign lands, regardless of the spiritual interests of those precious souls which were committed to their care. It is by such conduct in the clerical order, that religion and its ordinances are despised and treated with contempt, more than by all the efforts of avowed and unblushing infidelity; and it becomes all such seriously to consider how far they are responsible for the demoralization of society, the prevalence of irreligion, and the ruin of immortal souls; and what account they will one day be called to give of the manner in which they discharged the important office committed to their trust.

I shall now adduce a few miscellaneous examples, illustrative of the ascendency of the covetous principle in those who made, or who still make a flaming profession of religion.

A certain member of a dissenting church, who had long been a zealous supporter of its peculiar modes and tenets, had, in the course of his business as a carpenter, and by penurious habits, amassed a considerable portion of property, but was remarked to be of a hard and griping disposition, and could seldom be induced to contribute to any religious object. He had a brother, a man of good character, and a member of the same church, who, by family and personal distress, had been reduced to extreme poverty. Some of his Christian brethren represented to him the case of this distressed brother, and urged him to afford the family a little pecuniary relief. He replied, "My brother little knows how difficult it is for me to get money; I have nothing that I can spare. Does he know that I have lately bought a house, and have the price of it to pay in a few days?"—and he peremptorily refused to bestow a single shilling upon his distressed relative. Yet no public notice was taken of such

conduct by the religious society with which he was connected, for, unfortunately, such cases are not generally considered as *scandals*, or tests of the want of Christian principle. His wife who survived him, and who was of a similar disposition, while lying on her death-bed, kept the keys of her trunks and drawers constantly in her hands, and would, on no account, part with them to any individual, unless when she was in a position to perceive exactly every thing that was transacted while the keys were used, and appeared to be restless and uneasy till they were returned. The idea of losing a single sixpence, or the least article, seemed to go like a dagger to her heart. After she had breathed her last, a bag, containing bank-notes, bills, and other documents, was found in her hand, which she had carefully concealed from her attendants, as if she had expected to carry it along with her to the world of spirits. Such are the degrading and awful effects of covetousness, when suffered to gain the ascendency over the heart. Can such a spirit be supposed to be prepared for the mansions of the just, and for entering into that inheritance which is incorruptible, and that fadeth not away?

The following is another example, relating to a lady in comfortable circumstances, who died three or four years ago. This lady was married to a gentleman who was generally respected as a worthy man and a zealous Christian. His habits were somewhat penurious; and from a low situation, he rose by various means, some of which were scarcely honourable, to a state of wealth and independence, so that, about 12 years before his death, he was enabled to retire from the duties of his office, to live in a state of respectability. His wife was likewise a professed religious character; she had no children, and her great anxiety was to preserve, if possible, any portion of her husband's property from passing into the hands of his relations. When any of her husband's relatives happened to live with them for the sake of sociality or for affording them assistance in their old age, she denied them almost every comfort, and grumbled at the least article they received, as if it had been a portion of flesh torn from

her body—till, one by one, all such relatives forsook her After her husband's death, the same penurious habits remained, and, as is usually the case, grew stronger and more inveterate. After her death, a purse was found concealed under her pillow, containing above £300 in cash and bank-notes, to which, it appears, her heart had been more firmly wedded than to "the treasure in the heavens that faileth not," and "the glory which fadeth not away." Yet this sordid mortal passed among Christian society as a follower of Jesus. Another old woman died lately, who was a professed zealot for the truth, for "a covenanted work of reformation," and for testifying against abounding errors and immoralities in the church. She was noted among her neighbours for telling fibs, and giving false representations of her own circumstances and those of others. She represented herself as destitute of money, and almost of daily bread — that she could scarcely attain the enjoyment of the coarsest morsel—and, of course, she was favoured with a small aliment from a charitable fund. She was also distinguished as a busy-body and tale-bearer, and was frequently caught secretly listening to the conversation of her immediate neighbours, and had burrowed a hole below the partition which separated her apartment from that of another family, in order that she might indulge in this mean and unchristian practice. In a short time after she had represented herself as a destitute pauper, she died, and, after her death, when her store was inspected, it was found to contain a considerable quantity of confectionaries of different kinds, spirits, wines, and not a small portion of money and other articles, some of which had been accumulating for years. Yet no one was more zealous than Margaret for the truth, and for testifying against the "defections" of the established church, and the sins and immoralities of the age. Such examples as those now stated, are to be found throughout almost every portion of the visible church, and might be multiplied to an indefinite extent.

There is not a more common case of covetousness that occurs in Christian society, than that of *taking ad-*

vantage of the civil law, in opposition to natural justice, in order to gratify an avaricious affection. A father dies suddenly without a will; certain relations, perhaps the son of the first marriage, seize upon the father's property, while the widow and her infant children are turned adrift from their accustomed dwelling, either with nothing, or with a pittance so small as to be insufficient to procure the coarsest necessaries of life. Or, perhaps a will has been drawn up, specifying the intention of the father in regard to the inheritance of his property, but he dies before he has had an opportunity of subscribing the document. Though the will of the father was clearly made known to all concerned, yet a person called the *heir at law,* will immediately step in and claim the whole property which the parent intended to bequeath, without any regard to the *natural* rights of others. The death of parents and relatives frequently produces a scene of rapacity and avarice which is truly lamentable to a pious mind, and which no one could previously have expected. The death of friends which should naturally lead us to reflections on the vanity of worldly treasures, and the reality of a future state, not unfrequently steels the heart against every generous feeling, and opens all the avenues of ambition and avarice. As a certain writer has observed, "The voice from the tomb leads us back to the world, and from the very ashes of the dead there comes a fire which enkindles our earthly desires." The instances of this kind are so numerous, that volumes might be filled with the details. In opposition to every Christian principle, and to the dictates of natural justice, professed religionists will grasp at wealth wrung from the widow and the orphan, because the civil law does not interpose to prevent such bare-faced robberies; and yet they will dare to hold up their faces, without a blush, in Christian society—while one who had committed a fearless extensive robbery, *in another form,* would be held up to execration, and doomed to the gibbet. I know no practical use of Christian principle, unless it leads a man in such cases to perform an act of natural justice, altogether independent of the compulsions or regulations of

civil codes. "The law," says Paul, "was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, the ungodly and the profane;" and he who, in cases which natural justice should determine, takes shelter under the protection of law, in committing an act of oppression, ought to be excluded from the society of the faithful, and regarded as a "heathen man and a publican." That such characters are so frequently found in the visible church, is a plain evidence that the laws of Christ's kingdom are not yet strictly and impartially administered.

The forms of our civil laws are a striking proof of the extensive range of the operations of the covetous principle, and a kind of libel on the character of mankind, however much refined by civilization and Christianity. "It is impossible," says a periodical writer, "to see the long scrolls in which every contract is included, with all the appendages of seals and attestation, without wondering at the depravity of those beings who must be restrained from violation of promises by such formal and public evidences, and precluded from equivocation and subterfuge by such punctilious minuteness. Among all the satires to which folly and wickedness have given occasion, none is equally severe with a bond or a settlement." And is it not a satire upon Christianity, that its professed votaries require such legal obligation, and punctilious forms and specifications, to prevent the inroads of avarice? and that no one can safely trust money or property to any one on the faith of a Christian, or depending purely on his sense of equity and justice?

Before proceeding to the next department of our subject, it may not be improper to advert to our covetousness and idolatry, considered as a *nation.*

Great Britain has long been designated by the title of a *Christian nation.* But, if proud ambition and an inordinate love of riches and power be inconsistent with the religion of Jesus, we have, in many instances, forfeited our right to that appellation. Without adverting to the immense load of taxation which has long been levied from the mass of the people, and the extravagance with which many portions of it have been expended—the heavy

imposts on foreign produce, and the harassing regulations of the excise, which prevent a free intercourse with foreign nations—the keenness of our merchants and manufacturers in accumulating wealth and amassing immense fortunes for the purposes of luxury—the eagerness with which our Landholders endeavour to keep up the price of grain, although the poor should thus be deprived of many of their comforts—the poverty of one class of our clergy and the extravagant incomes enjoyed by others —passing the consideration of these and similar characteristics, I shall only mention one circumstance which appears altogether inconsistent with our character as a Christian nation, and that is, *the revenues derived from the support of* IDOLATRY *in India*, and the encouragement thus given to the cruelties and abominations of Pagan worship.

In another age, it will perhaps scarcely be believed, that Britain, distinguished for her zeal in propagating the gospel throughout the heathen world, has, for many years past, derived a revenue from the worshippers of the idol *Juggernaut*, and other idols of a similar description at Gya, Allahabad, Tripetty, and other places in Hindostan. From the year 1813 to 1825, there was collected, by order of the British government, from the pilgrims of Juggernaut alone, about 1,360,000 rupees, or £170,000; a great part of which was devoted to the support of the idol, and the priests who officiated in conducting the ceremonies of this abominable worship. Dr. Buchanan, in his "Christian Researches," states, from official accounts, that the annual expense of the idol Juggernaut presented to the English government as follows:

	Rupees.	£.
Expenses of the Table of the Idol, - - - - -	36,115 or	4,514
Do. of his dress, or wearing apparel, - -	2,712	339
Do. wages of his servants, - - - - -	10,057	1,259
Do. contingent expenses at the different seasons of pilgrimage, - - - - -	10,989	1,373
Do. of his elephants and horses, - - - -	3,030	378
Do. of his annual state carriage, or the car and tower of the idol, - - - -	6,713	839
Rupees,	69,616	£8,702

In the item "wages of servants," are included the wages of the *courtezans*, or strumpets who are kept for the service of the temple. Mr. Hunter, the collector of the pilgrim tax for the year 1806, told Mr. Buchanan that three state carriages were decorated that year, with upwards of £200 sterling of English *broadcloth* and *baize*.

The following items show the gain of this unnatural association with idolatry at some of the principal stations appropriated for idol worship.

		Rupees.
Net receipts of pilgrim tax at Juggernaut for 1815, - -		135,667
Do.	at Gya for 1816, - - - - - - - - - -	182,876
Do.	at Allahabad, for 1816, - - - - - - - -	73,053
Do.	at Kashee-poor, Surkuree, Sumbal and Kawa for 1816, - - - - - - - - - - - -	5,683
Do.	at Tripetty, near Madras, for 1811, - - -	152,000
	Rupees,*	549,279

Mr. Hamilton, in his "Description of Hindostan," as quoted by Mr. Peggs, in his "Pilgrim tax in India," states with respect to the district of Tanjore, that "in almost every village, there is a temple with a lofty gateway of massive architecture, where a great many Brahmins are maintained, partly *by an allowance from government.* The Brahmins are here extremely loyal, on account of the protection they receive, and also for *an allowance granted them by the British government of* 45,000 *pagodas or* £18,000 *annually, which is distributed for the support of the poorer temples*,"—a sum which would purchase one hundred and eighty thousand Bibles at two shillings each! Can any thing be more inconsistent than the conduct of a professed *Christian* nation in thus supporting a system of idolatry, the most revolting, cruel, lascivious, and profane? Yet a member of the parliament, C. Buller, Esq., in his letter to the Court of Directors, relative to Jugger-

* A *Rupee*, though generally considered to be only the value of half a crown, yet is reckoned in the case of the pilgrims of India. to be equivalent to the value of one pound sterling to an inhabitant of Britain, so that, in this point of view, rupees may be considered as equivalent to pounds.

naut, in 1813, says, "I cannot see what possible objection there is to the continuance of an established tax, particularly when it is taken into consideration what large possessions in land and money *are allowed by our government*, in all parts of the country, *for keeping up the religious institutions of the Hindoos and the Mussulmans.*"

The scenes of Juggernaut and other idol-temples are so well known to the British public, that I need not dwell on the abominations and the spectacles of misery presented in these habitations of cruelty. I shall only remark that, from all parts of India, numerous bodies of idol-worshippers or *pilgrims* travel many hundreds of miles to pay homage to the different idols to which I have alluded. A tax is imposed by the British government on these pilgrims, graduated according to the rank or circumstances of the pilgrim, and amounting from *one* to *twenty* or *thirty* rupees—which, according to the estimate stated in the preceding note, (p. 71), will be equivalent to one pound sterling to the poorest class of pilgrims. Those journeying to Allahabad, for example, are taxed at the following rates. On every pilgrim on foot, *one rupee.* On every pilgrim with a horse or palanquin, *two rupees.* On every pilgrim with an elephant, *twenty rupees*, &c. Vast numbers of deluded creatures flock every year to these temples. In 1825, the number that arrived at Juggernaut was estimated at *two hundred and twenty-five thousand*, and in some cases they have been calculated to amount to *more than a million.* The deprivations and miseries suffered by many of these wretched beings are almost incredible. Dr. Buchanan, who visited Juggernaut temple in June, 1806, gives the following statement. "Numbers of pilgrims die on the road, and their bodies generally remain unburied. On a plain near the pilgrim caravansera, 100 miles from Juggernaut, I saw more than 100 skulls; the dogs, jackals, and vultures, seem to live here on human prey. Wherever I turn my eyes, I meet death in one shape or other. From the place where I now stand, I have a view of a host of people, like an army encamped at the outer gate of the town of Juggernaut,

where a guard of soldiers is posted, *to prevent them from entering the town until they have paid the tax.* A pilgrim announced that he was ready to offer himself a sacrifice to the idol. He laid himself down on the road before the car as it was moving along, on his face, with his arms stretched forward. The multitude passed him, leaving the space clear, and he was crushed to death by the wheels. *How much I wished that the proprietors of India stock would have attended the wheels of Juggernaut, and seen this peculiar source of their revenue!* I beheld a distressing scene this morning in the place of skulls; a poor woman lying dead, or nearly so, and her two children by her, looking at the dogs and vultures which were near. The people passed by without noticing the children! I asked them where was their home? They said they had no home but where their mother was. O there is no pity at Juggernaut! Those who support his kingdom, err, I trust, from ignorance; they know not what they do."

"The loss of life," says Colonel Phipps, who witnessed this festival in 1822, "by this deplorable superstition, probably exceeds that of any other. The aged, the weak, the sick, are persuaded to attempt this pilgrimage as a remedy for all evils. The number of women and children is also very great, and they leave their families and their occupations to travel an immense distance, with the delusive hope of obtaining eternal bliss. Their means of subsistence on the road are scanty, and their light clothing and little bodily strength, are ill calculated to encounter the inclemency of the weather. When they approach the temple, they find scarcely enough left to pay the tax to government, and to satisfy the rapacious brahmins; and, on leaving Juggernaut, with a long journey before them, their means of support are often quite exhausted. The work of death then becomes rapid, and the route of the pilgrims may be traced by the bones left by jackals and vultures, and the dead bodies may be seen in every direction."

The Rev. W. Bampton, in an account of this festival,

in July, 1823, states, "in the front of one of the cars lay the body of a dead man; one arm and one leg were eaten; and two dogs were then eating him; many people were near, both moving and stationary, but they did not seem to take any notice of the circumstance. I went to see the pilgrims, who, because they could not pay the tax, were kept without one of the gates. In the course of the morning, I saw, within a mile of the gate, six more dead, and the dogs and birds were eating three of them. Five or six lay dead within a mile of the gate. A military officer pointed out a piece of ground, scarcely an acre, on which he had, last year, counted *twenty-five dead bodies.*" Mr. Lacey, a missionary, who was at the festival in June, 1825, states, "On the evening of the 19th, I counted upwards of sixty dead and dying, from the temple, to about half a mile below—leaving out the sick that had not much life. In every street, corner, and open space—in fact, wherever you turned your eyes, the dead and the dying met your sight. I visited one of the Golgothas between the town and the principal entrance, and I saw sights which I never shall forget. The small river there was quite glutted with the dead bodies. The wind had drifted them all together, and they were a complete mass of putrefying flesh. They also lay upon the ground in heaps, and the dogs and birds were able to do but little towards devouring them." Such horrid details could be multiplied without number; every one who has visited such scenes of misery and depravity, gives similar relations, some of which are still more horrible and revolting. With regard to the *number* that perish on such occasions, the Rev. Mr. Ward estimates that 4000 pilgrims perish every year, on the roads to and at holy places—an estimate which is considered by others as far below the truth. Captain F——— estimates those who died at Cuttack and Pooree, and between the two stations, at 5000. How many of these miserable people must have died before they reached their homes! many of them coming three, six, or nine hundred miles. Mr. M———, the European collector of the tax at *Pooree*, estimated the mortality at 20,000!

Juggernaut is one of the most celebrated stations of idolatry in India. All the land within twenty miles is considered holy; but the most sacred spot is enclosed within a stone wall twenty-one feet high, forming a square of about 656 feet. Within this area are about fifty temples; but the most conspicuous buildings consist of one lofty stone tower, 184 feet high and twenty-eight and a half feet square inside. The idol Juggernaut, his brother Bulbudra, and his sister Sabadra, occupy the tower. The roofs are ornamented with representations of monsters; the walls of the temple are covered with statues of stone, representing Hindoo gods, with their wives, in attitudes grossly indecent. The three celebrated idols alluded to, are wooden busts six feet high, having a rude resemblance of the human head, and are painted white, yellow, and black, with frightfully grim and distorted countenances. They are covered with spangled broadcloth, *furnished from the export warehouse of the British government.* The car on which the idol is drawn, measures forty-three and a half feet high, has sixteen wheels, of six and a half feet diameter, and a platform thirty-four and a half feet square. The ceremonies connected with this idolatrous worship, are, in many instances, exceedingly revolting and obscene. At Ranibut, in the province of Gurwal, is a temple sacred to *Rajah Ishwara*, which is principally inhabited by *dancing women.* The initiation into this society is performed by anointing the head with oil taken from the lamp placed before the altar, by which act they make a formal abjuration of their parents and kindred, *devoting their future lives to prostitution*, and the British government, by giving annually 512 rupees to the religious mendicants who frequent this temple, directly sanction this system of obscenity and pollution. Many temples of impurity exist in other places of Hindostan. Tavernier mentions a village where there is a pagoda to which all the Indian *courtezans* come to make their offerings. This pagoda is full of a great number of *naked* images. Girls of eleven or twelve years old, who have been bought

and educated for the purpose, are sent by their mistresses to this pagoda, *to offer and surrender themselves up to this idol.*

In order to induce ignorant devotees to forsake their homes, and commence pilgrims to these temples of impurity and idolatry, a set of avaricious villains, termed *Pilgrim hunters*, are employed to traverse the country, and by all manner of falsehoods, to proclaim the greatness of Juggernaut and other idols. They declare, for example, that this idol has now so fully convinced his conquerors [that is, the British] of his divinity, that they have taken his temple under their own superintendency, and that they expend 60,000 rupees from year to year to provide him with an attendance worthy of his dignity. These pilgrim hunters *are paid by the British government.* If one of them can march out a thousand persons and persuade them to undertake the journey, he receives 1500 rupees, if they be of the lower class; and 3000 rupees, if they be persons belonging to the highest class. But, what is worst of all—the conduct of the British government in relation to this system, has led many of the natives to believe that *the British nation approves of the idolatrous worship established in India.* A Hindoo inquired of a missionary in India, "If Juggernaut be nothing, why does the Company take so much money from those who come to see him?" Mr. Lacey, a missionary, who went to relieve the destitute on the road to Cuttack, during one of the festivals, relates the following incident:—"You would have felt your heart moved, to hear, as I did, the natives say—'*Your preaching is a lie;—for, if your Saviour and your religion are thus merciful, how do you then take away the money of the poor and suffer him to starve?*' It is indeed no wonder that when the natives see a poor creature lying dying for want, they should reflect, that the two rupees he paid as a tax, would have kept him alive. Nor is it indeed a pleasing reflection to a European mind, *that these two rupees form precisely the difference between life and death to many who have perished for want on their road home.* Another missionary

relates, "Passing one evening a large temple, I caught a sight of one of the idols, and exclaimed, sinful, sinful. The native who was with me asked, 'Sir, is that sinful for which the Company give thousands?' A man said to me a few days ago, 'If the government does not forsake Juggernaut, how can you expect that we should?'" In this way the efforts of Christian missionaries to turn the Hindoo from idolatry, are, in many instances, completely paralyzed.*

Such is the worship which the British government supports, and from which it derives an annual revenue: Such is the *covetousness* literally and directly connected with "*idolatry*," manifested by those who give their sanction and support to a system of idol-worship, distinguished for rapacity, cruelty, obscenity, and every thing shocking to the feelings of humanity! If we are commanded to "flee from idolatry," "to abstain from meats offered to idols," and to "hate even the garment spotted by the flesh," what shall we think of the practice of receiving hundreds of thousands of rupees annually, for permitting blinded idolaters to worship the most despicable idols—of clothing those idols, repairing their temples, and paying the rapacious and unfeeling priests that minister at their altars? What shall we think of the practice of Christian Britons sending forth a body of idol-missionaries, far exceeding in number all the Christian missionaries, perhaps, throughout the world, who, from year to year, propagate delusion, and proclaim, for the sake of gain—the transcendent efficacy of beholding "*a log of wood!*" "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this." No wonder if *Christian* missionaries have the most formidable opposition to encounter, when the very nation that sent them forth to undermine the fabric of Pagan superstition, gives *direct* countenance and support to every thing that is abhorrent and debasing in the system of idolatry.

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* Most of the facts above stated have been selected and abridged from Mr. Pegg's "Pilgrim tax in India."

How appropriate the wish expressed by Dr. Buchanan, "that the proprietors of India stock, could have attended the wheels of Juggernaut, and seen this peculiar source of their revenue!" I would live on "a dinner of herbs," or even on the grass of the fields, before I would handle a sum of money procured in this way, to supply the most delicious fare. From whatever motives support is given to this system of Idolatry it will remain an indelible stain on the British nation, to generations yet unborn, and its miserable and demoralizing effects will only be fully known in the eternal world.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE ABSURDITY AND IRRATIONALITY OF COVETOUSNESS

The Creator has endowed man with mental faculties which, if properly directed and employed, would be sufficient, in many cases, to point out the path of virtue, and to show the folly and unreasonableness of vice. All the laws of God, when properly investigated as to their tendency and effects, will be found accordant with the dictates of enlightened reason, and calculated to produce the greatest sum of human happiness; and the dispositions and vices which these laws denounce will uniformly be found to have a tendency to produce discomfort and misery, and to subvert the moral order and happiness of the intelligent system. On these and similar grounds, it may not be inexpedient to offer a few remarks on the folly and irrationality of the vice to which our attention is directed.

In the first place, *the irrationality of Covetousness*, will appear, if we consider *the noble intellectual faculties with which man is endowed.*

Man is furnished not only with sensitive powers to perceive and enjoy the various objects with which his terrestrial habitation is replenished, but also with the powers of memory, imagination, judgment, reasoning, and the moral faculty. By these powers he can retrace and contemplate the most remarkable events which have happened in every period of the world, since time began; survey the magnificent scenery of nature in all its variety and extent; dive into the depths of the ocean; ascend into the regions of the atmosphere; pry into the invisible regions of creation, and behold the myriads of animated

beings that people the drops of water; determine the courses of the celestial orbs; measure the distances and magnitudes of the planets; predict the returns of comets and eclipses; convey himself along mighty rivers, and across the expansive ocean; render the most stubborn elements of nature subservient to his designs and obedient to his commands; and, in short, can penetrate beyond all that is visible to common eyes, to those regions of space where suns unnumbered shine, and mighty worlds are running their solemn rounds; and perceive the agency of Infinite Power displaying itself throughout the unlimited regions of the universe. By these powers he can trace the existence and the attributes of an Invisible and Almighty Being operating in the sun, the moon, and the starry orbs, in the revolutions of the seasons, the agency of the elements, the process of vegetation, the functions of animals, and the moral relations which subsist among intelligent beings; and in such studies and contemplations he can enjoy a happiness infinitely superior to all the delights of mere animal sensation. How *unreasonable* then, is it, for a being who possesses such sublime faculties, to have his whole soul absorbed in raking together a few paltry pounds or dollars, which he either applies to no useful object, or employs merely for purposes of pride and ostentation! We are apt to smile at a little boy hoarding up heaps of cherry stones, small pebbles, or sea shells; but he acts a more rational part than the covetous man whose desires are concentrated in "heaping up gold as the dust, and silver as the stones of the brook;" for the boy has not arrived at the full exercise of his rational powers, and is incapable of forming a comprehensive judgment of those pursuits which ought to be the great end of his existence. The aims and pursuits of every intelligence, ought to correspond with the faculties he possesses. But does the hoarding of one shilling after another, day by day, and the absorption of the faculties in this degrading object, while almost every higher aim is set aside,—correspond to the noble powers with which man is invested, and the variety and sublimity of those objects which solicit their attention? Is there, indeed,

any comparison between acquiring riches and wealth as an ultimate object, and the cultivation of the intellectual faculties, and the noble pursuit of knowledge and moral improvement? If man had been intended to live the life of a miser, he would rather have been formed into the shape of an *ant* or a *pismire*, to dig among mud and sand and putrefaction, to burrow in holes and crevices of the earth, and to heap up seeds and grains against the storms of winter; in which state he would live according to the order of nature, and be incapable of degrading his mental and moral powers.

There cannot be a more absurd and preposterous exhibition, than that of a man furnished with powers capable of arresting the elements of nature, of directing the lightnings in their course, of penetrating to the distant regions of creation, of weighing the masses of surrounding worlds, of holding a sublime intercourse with his Almighty Maker, and of perpetual progression in knowledge and felicity, throughout an interminable round of existence; yet prostrating these noble powers by concentrating them on the one sole object of amassing a number of guineas and bank-notes, which are never intended to be applied to any rational or benevolent purpose; as if man were raised no higher in the scale of intellect, than the worms of the dust! Even some of the lower animals, as the dog and the horse, display more noble and generous feelings, than the earth-worm, from whose grasp you cannot wrench a single shilling for any beneficent object. And shall man, who was formed after the image of his Maker, and invested with dominion over all the inferior tribes of animated nature, thus reduce himself by his grovelling affections below the rank of the beasts of the forest and the fowls of heaven? Nothing can afford a plainer proof of man's depravity, and that he has fallen from his high estate of primeval innocence and rectitude; and there cannot be a greater libel on Christianity and on Christian churches, than that such characters should assume the Christian profession, and have their names enrolled among the society of the faithful.

2. The folly of covetousness appears in *the absolute* WANT OF UTILITY *which characterizes the conduct of the avaricious man.*

True wisdom consists in proportioning means to ends, and in proposing a good and worthy end as the object of our pursuit. He would be accounted a fool, who should attempt to build a ship of war on one of the highest peaks of the Alps or the Andes, or who should spend a large fortune in constructing a huge machine which was of no use to mankind, but merely that they might look at the motion of its wheels and pinions; or who should attempt to pile up a mountain of sand within the limits of the sea, which the foaming billows, at every returning tide, would sweep away into the bosom of the deep. But the man "who lays up treasures for himself and is not rich towards God," acts with no less unreasonableness and folly. He hoards riches which he never intends to use; he vexes and torments himself in acquiring them; he stints himself of even lawful sensitive comforts; and his sole enjoyment seems to be that of brooding over in his mind an *arithmetical idea* connected with hundreds or thousands of circular pieces of gold, or square slips of paper. The poor are never to be warmed, or fed, or clothed, the oppressed relieved, the widow's heart made to leap for joy, the ignorant instructed, the ordinances of religion supported, or the gospel promoted in heathen lands, by means of any of the treasures which he accumulates. He "spends his money for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth not;" and neither himself, his family, his friends, his country, or the world, is benefited by his wealth. I have read of a Reverend Mr. Hagamore of Catshoge, Leicestershire, on whose death, in January, 1776, it was found that he had accumulated thirty gowns and cassocks, one hundred pair of breeches, one hundred pair of boots, four hundred pair of shoes, eighty wigs, *yet always wore his own hair*, fifty-eight dogs, eighty wagons and carts, eighty ploughs, and *used none*, fifty saddles, and furniture for the menage, thirty wheel-barrows, sixty horses and mares, seventy

four ladders, two hundred pick-axes, two hundred spades and shovels, two hundred and forty-nine razors, and so many walking-sticks, that a toysman in Leicesterfields, offered eight pounds sterling to procure them.* Every one will at once perceive that this man, although he had the title of "Reverend" affixed to his name, must have been nothing else but a Reverend *fool*, or something approaching to a maniac; for, to accumulate such a number of useful articles, merely for the purpose of looking at them, or brooding over the idea that they were in one's possession, without any higher object in view, is surely the characteristic of folly and irrationality, if any thing ought to designate a person a fool or a madman.

Now, let us suppose for a moment, instead of money, a man were to hoard in a garret or a warehouse appropriated for the purpose—10,000 pots or cauldrons that were never to be used in cooking victuals, or for any other process,—15,000 tea-kettles, 20,000 coffee-pots, 25,000 pair of boots, 30,000 knee-buckles, 32,000 great coats, and 40,000 pair of trowsers—suppose that none of these articles were intended to be sold or appropriated to such uses as they are generally intended to serve, but merely to be gazed at from day to day, or contemplated in the *ideas* of them that float before the imagination—what should we think of the man who spent his whole life, and concentrated all the energies of his soul in such romantic pursuits and acquisitions? We should at once decide, that he was unqualified for associating with rational beings, and fit only for a place within the precincts of bedlam. But what is the great difference between accumulating twenty thousand cork-screws, or

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*This singular clergyman, when he died, was worth £700 per annum, and £1000 in money, which fell to a ticket porter in London. He kept one servant of each sex, whom he locked up every night. His last employment on an evening, was to go round his premises, let loose his dogs, and fire his gun. He lost his life as follows: going one morning to let out his servants, the dogs fawned upon him suddenly, and threw him into a pond, where he was found dead. His servants heard his calls for assistance, but, being locked up, they could not lend him any help.

thirty thousand shoe-brushes, and hoarding as many thousands of shillings, dollars or pieces of paper called bank notes, which are never intended to be brought forth for the benefit of mankind? The cases are almost exactly parallel; and he who is considered as a fool or maniac, in the one case, deserves to be branded with the same epithets, in the other. Were a man to employ the greater part of his life in laying up millions of cherry-stones or pin-heads, and find his chief delight in contemplating his heaps, and continually adding to their number, he would be considered as below the scale of a rational being, and unfit for general society. But there is no *essential difference* between such a fool, and the man whose great and ultimate aim is to accumulate thousands of dollars or of guineas. Both classes of persons are in reality *maniacs* —with this difference, that the first class would be considered as labouring under a serious *mental derangement*, and therefore objects of sympathy and pity; while the other are considered as in the full exercise of their intellectual powers, although they are prostrating them in the pursuit of objects as degrading and irrational, as those which engross the imagination of the inmates of bedlam.

But, suppose that riches are coveted, not for the purpose of being hoarded, but for the purpose of being expended in selfish gratifications, there is almost as much folly and irrationality in the latter case as in the former. Suppose a man to have an income of £3000 a year, and that £800 are sufficient to procure him all the sensitive enjoyments suitable to his station—is it *rational*, is it *useful*, either to himself or others, that he should waste £2200 in vain or profligate pursuits, in balls, masquerades, gambling, hounding, horse racing, expensive attire, and splendid equipages — when there are so many poor to be relieved, so many ignorant to be instructed, so many improvements requisite for the comfort of general society, so many sciences to cultivate, so many arts to patronize, and so many arduous exertions required for promoting the general renovation of the world—and scarcely a single guinea devoted to either of these objects? Such conduct is no less irrational and degrading, in a moral

and accountable agent, than that of the grovelling wretch who hoards his money in a bag which is never opened but with jealous care when he has a few more guineas or dollars to put into it. In both cases, wealth is turned aside from its legitimate channel, and perverted to purposes directly opposite to the will of the Creator, and the true happiness of mankind.

3. The folly of Avarice will appear, *if we consider it in relation to rational enjoyment.*

The rational enjoyment of life consists, among other things, in the moderate use of the bounties of Providence which God has provided for all his creatures—in the exercise of our physical and mental powers on those objects which are calculated to afford satisfaction and delight—in the emotions of contentment and gratitude towards our Creator—in the sweets of an approving conscience—in the acquisition of knowledge—in the flow of the benevolent affections, in affectionate social intercourse with our fellow men, in the exercise of tenderness, sympathy, and good will towards others, and in that calmness or equanimity which remains unruffled amidst the changes of fortune, and the untoward incidents of human life. Now, in none of these respects can the covetous man experience the sweets of true enjoyment. He has it in his power to enjoy all the sensitive pleasures in which a rational being ought to indulge, yet he stints himself even of necessary comforts, and lives upon *husks* when he might feast himself on the choicest dainties, because it might prevent him from adding new stores to his secret treasures. He will shiver amidst the colds of winter, under a tattered coat, or a thread-bare covering, and sit benumbed in his apartment without a fire to cheer him, because the purchase of requisite comforts would diminish the number of his pounds, shillings, and pence. He will lie on a bed of straw, during the dark evenings of winter, like a mere animal existence, rather than furnish oil for a lamp, and will wallow like a sow amidst mire and filth, rather than give the smallest trifle to a person to clean his apartment. Of *mental* pleasures he can

scarcely be said to enjoy the smallest share, except in so far as the *ideas* of accumulated gold and silver are concerned. He is necessarily oppressed with *restless anxiety*. The objects of his covetousness are, in most instances, necessarily uncertain. He strives to obtain them, but is doubtful of success; his mind hangs between hope and fear; his desires are, however, continually exerted; he is on the rack as it were, till he sees the issue of his adventure, and in numerous cases, his hopes are blasted, and his schemes disconcerted; and when the plans of gain he had laid are frustrated, or a portion of his wealth destroyed by an unexpected accident, he feels all the pains and agonies of a man verging towards poverty and ruin. While a contented man may become rich, to every desirable degree, amid the full possession of serenity of mind, and self-approbation, the anxiety of the covetous is necessarily great and *distressing;* and that is one part of the punishment he inevitably suffers under the righteous government of God, on account of his infringement of the natural and moral laws of the universe. To the misery of perpetual anxiety are added incessant *labour*, and an endless and wearisome train of exertion to augment his gains and secure himself from losses. Like a slave or a mill-horse, he drudges on in a state of travail, and in an unceasing whirl of toil and effort, which leave no intervals for rational reflection and enjoyment; and, after all, his desires are still craving and still unsatisfied.

In the midst of such labour and mental efforts and perplexities, he meets with frequent disappointments. His deeds or obligations are found to be defective; his bills are refused to be discounted; his agents prove cheats and deceivers; storms will blow in spite of him, and sink his ships in the mighty waters; floods and inundations will sweep away the produce of his fields; his crops will fail; his cattle die; his debtors abscond or become bankrupts, and the devouring flames will seize upon his houses and barns, or his shops and warehouses, and consume them to ashes. In all such cases, where a contented mind will endeavour to submit with calmness to the allotments of Providence, the mind of the covetous impugns the recti-

tude of the Divine dispensation, and heaves with unutterable throes of agony and despair. In the language of inspiration "he is pierced through," or, compassed on every side "*with many sorrows*," and the inward language of his heart is—and it is awfully appropriate, "Ye have taken away my gods; and what have I more?" Amidst such misfortunes and mental pangs, he is frequently left without friends, without pity, or sympathy, or commiseration—pointed at with the finger of scorn, stung by the keen sarcasms of his neighbours, and considered as a fit mark for the shafts of contempt and derision, while the lashes of his own conscience add a keenness to his anguish. It is almost needless to add, that he derives no enjoyment from the exercise of kindness and benignity, from the pursuits of knowledge, the contemplation of nature, the affectionate association of his fellow-men, or the satisfaction which arises from deeds of beneficence, for his degrading pursuits leave him neither leisure nor relish for such refined gratifications. Who, then, that has any regard to rational enjoyment, would desire the state of mind, and the condition of such a wretched mortal, even although his bags were full of gold, and his barns filled with plenty.

Nor are the enjoyments much superior, of the man who covets riches merely for the purpose of living in splendour and fashionable dissipation. To a rational mind conscious of its dignity, and of the noble powers with which it is furnished, how poor a gratification would it receive from all the pleasures and gewgaws that fascinate the worldly minded and the gay? Are the pleasures derived from rich viands, delicious wines, costly apparel, stately mansions, splendid equipages, fashionable parties and diversions, an enjoyment adequate to the sublime faculties, and the boundless desires of an immortal mind? How many of those who make such pleasures the grand object of their pursuit, are found the slaves of the most abject passions, with hearts overflowing with pride, rankling with envy, fired with resentment at every trivial affront, revengeful of injuries, and hurried along, by the lust of ambition, into every folly and extravagance?

Where such passions are continually operating, along with all their kindred emotions, and where benevolence is seldom exercised, it is impossible that true happiness can ever be enjoyed. And hence, we find, among persons of this description, more instances of suicide, and more numerous examples of family feuds, contentions, and separations, than among any other class of general society. So that there is no reason to desire the enjoyments of covetousness in whatever channel it may run, or whatever shape it may assume.

4. The folly and irrationality of covetousness appears, *when we consider the immortal destination of man.*

There are thousands of misers and other worldlings who are governed by the lust of ambition and covetousness, who admit the doctrine of a future state of punishments and rewards. Independently of those arguments which may be drawn from the nature of the human soul, its desires of knowledge and capacious intellectual powers, the unlimited range of view which is opened to these faculties, throughout the immensity of space and duration, the moral attributes of God, the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in the present state, and other considerations,—there is a *premonition* and a powerful impression in almost every human mind, that the range of its existence is not confined to the present life, but that a world of bliss or woe awaits it beyond the grave. And, as vast multitudes of worldly and avaricious characters are to be found connected with the visible church, or frequenting its services; by this very circumstance, they formally admit, that there is another scene of existence into which they enter at the hour of dissolution.

Now, how irrational and inconsistent is it for a man to admit, that there is a world beyond the present which is to be the scene of his *everlasting* abode, and yet continue to have his whole thoughts and affections *absorbed* in pursuing the riches and transitory gratifications of the present life, without casting a serious glance on the realities of the invisible state, or preparing to meet them? If

we had just views of all the momentous realities, and the scenes of glory, and of terror, connected with the idea of an eternal world, and could contrast them with the vain and fleeting enjoyments of this mortal scene, we should perceive a *folly* and even a species of *madness* in such conduct, more astonishing than what is seen in any other course of action pursued by human beings. If a man have an estate in a distant country, on the proceeds of which a considerable portion of his income depends, he will not forget that he has an interest in that country; he will correspond with it, and will be anxious to learn intelligence respecting its affairs from periodical journals and other sources of information. If a person, on the expiry of ten years, has the prospect of entering on the possession of a rich inheritance, he will look forward to it, with longing expectations, and will employ his thoughts in making arrangements for enjoying it, though perhaps he may not live to take possession. Nay, we shall find many individuals spending weeks and months in melancholy and chagrin for the loss of a few guineas or dollars, and, at other times, deriving their chief pleasure from the prospect of a paltry gain. Yet strange to tell many such persons remain altogether insensible to the joys and sorrows of a future world, and never make the least arrangement in reference to that state; although there is an absolute *certainty* that it awaits them, and that it is possible they may be ushered into it before to-morrow's dawn. Can any species of folly with which men are chargeable, be compared with such apathy and indifference about *everlasting* things, when such things are admitted to have a real existence?

It is a dictate of wisdom, and even of common sense, that when a person has a prospect of occupying any office or condition in life, he ought to engage in that course of preparation which will qualify him for performing its duties and enjoying its comforts. But what preparation does the covetous man make for enabling him to *relish* the enjoyments, and to engage in the exercises of the eternal world? Will heaping up silver as the dust, and filling his bags with sovereigns and dollars, and *con-*

centrating his thoughts and affections on such objects, *prepare* him for the sublime contemplations of the spirits of just men made perfect, and the hallelujahs of the heavenly host? Will his hard griping disposition which never permitted him to drop the tear of sympathy, or to relieve the widow and the orphan, render him meet for associating with the inhabitants of that world, where *love* and the purest affections, in all their varied ramifications, forever prevail? Will his anxious desires and his incessant toils from morning to night, to add to the number of his guineas, and the extent of his property, qualify him for surveying the wonderful works of God, and contemplating the glory of Him "who was slain and hath redeemed us to God by his blood?" Can any man, who has the least spark of rationality within him, imagine that such conduct and such dispositions, are at all compatible with preparation for the felicities of the heavenly state? Or, does the poor degraded miser really believe that heaven is filled with bags of gold and silver, and that there is no employment there but "buying and selling, and getting gain?" If the mansions of heaven, and the exercises of its inhabitants, be such as the Scriptures delineate, then, there is an utter incompatibility between the employments of the celestial state, and the train of action, and the temper of mind, of the covetous man, which renders him altogether *unqualified* for its enjoyments. And, if he be unprepared for the joys and the services of the heavenly state, he cannot, in consistency with the constitution of the moral world, be admitted into its mansions, but must necessarily sink into "the blackness of darkness for ever."

Nor are the pursuits of the worldling, who spends his wealth in vanity and luxury, more compatible with the joys of the celestial world. This will appear, if we consider some of the ingredients which enter into the essence of heavenly felicity. From the representations of this state given in the Scriptures, we learn, that it is a state of perfect purity and holiness; that the minds of its inhabitants are irradiated with divine knowledge, and adorned with every divine virtue; that *love* pervades and unites

the hearts of the whole of that vast assembly; that *humility* is one of their distinguishing characteristics; that they are for ever engaged in *beneficent* services; that the contemplation of the works and ways of God forms a part of their employment; and that they are unceasingly engaged in sublime adorations of the Creator of the universe, in contemplating the glory and celebrating the praises of Him "who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." But what resemblance is there between such a state and such employments, and the pursuits of the gay worldling whose heart is set upon his riches as the chief object of his affections? Would the man who spends his wealth in hounding, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and gambling, find any similar entertainments for his amusement in the upper world? Would the proud and ambitious, who look down on the vulgar throng as if they were the worms of the dust, and who value themselves on account of their stately mansions and glittering equipage, find any enjoyment in a world where *humility* is the distinguishing disposition of all its inhabitants? Would the warrior, who delights in carnage and devastation, expect to have cities to storm, towns to pillage, or armies to manœuvre, or would he think of rehearsing in "the assembly of the just," the deeds of violence and slaughter which he perpetrated upon earth? Would the fine lady who struts in all the gaiety and splendour of dress, who spends half her time at her *toilette*, and in fashionable visits, whose chief delight consists in rattling dice and shuffling cards, in attending balls, masquerades, and plays; who never devotes a single sovereign to beneficent purposes, or to the propagation of religion; whose life is one continued round of frivolity and dissipation; would such a character meet with any similar entertainments in the society of the angelic hosts, and of the spirits of just men made perfect? In short, can it be supposed in consistency with reason, that such dispositions and pursuits have a tendency to produce a *relish* for the enjoyments of the celestial world, and to prepare the soul for joining, with delight, in the exercises of its inhabitants? If not, then such characters would

find no enjoyment, although they were admitted within the gates of paradise; but, like the gloomy owl, which shuns the light of day, and the society of the feathered tribes, they would flee from the society and the abodes of the blessed, to other retreats, and to more congenial companions.

Thus it appears, that covetousness, whatever form it may assume, is utterly inconsistent with any rational or scriptural ideas we can entertain in relation to man's eternal destiny. He is a poor, pitiable fool who makes the slightest pretences to religion, while his heart is the seat of avaricious desires, or who makes riches, gay apparel, foolish amusements, and the gratification of pride and vanity, the chief object of his pursuit. He subjects himself to unnecessary distress by the compunctions of conscience, which the denunciations of religion must occasionally produce; and, if he has any measure of common sense, he must plainly perceive, that any hopes of happiness he may indulge in relation to a future state, are founded on "the baseless fabric of a vision." The only *consistent* plan, therefore, which he can adopt—if he is determined to prosecute his avaricious courses—is, to endeavour to prove religion a fable, to abandon himself to downright scepticism, to scout the idea of a Supreme Governor of the universe, and to try, if he can, to live "without God, and without hope in the world."

CHAPTER III.

ON THE INCONSISTENCY OF COVETOUSNESS WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

There is no vicious propensity of the human heart more frequently alluded to, and more severely denounced in the Scriptures of truth, than the sin of covetousness. For it strikes at the root of all true religion, saps the foundations of piety and benevolence, and is accompanied with innumerable vices and evil propensities, which rob God of his honour and glory, and "drown men in destruction and perdition." It would be too tedious to enter into all the views which the word of God exhibits of the nature and tendencies of this sin, of the threatenings which are denounced against it, and of its utter inconsistency with the benevolent spirit of the religion of Jesus; and therefore, I shall select for illustration, only two or three prominent particulars.

In the first place, this propensity is branded in Scripture with the name of Idolatry. "Let not covetousness," says Paul to the Ephesians, "be once named among you, as becometh saints. For this ye know, that no covetous man *who is an idolater*, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." And, in his Epistle to the Colossians, he enumerates, among the vices which bring down the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, "*covetousness which is idolatry.*"*

Idolatry is one of the greatest crimes of which a rational being can be guilty; for it is that which is the source of all the ignorance, superstition, cruelties, immoralities, and obscene abominations of the heathen world. It is to idolatry we are to ascribe the burning of widows in Hindostan, the cruel rites of Juggernaut, the exposing of the sick and dying on the banks of the Ganges, the murder of infants, the infernal sacrifices of the Mexicans,

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* Ephes. v. 3, 5. Colos. iii. 5.

the making of children pass through the fire to Moloch, the human butcheries which are perpetrated in almost every pagan land to appease imaginary deities, the abominations of the ancient Canaanites, the murders and obscenities of the South Sea Islanders, the degradation of intellect which is found in every heathen country, and the innumerable vices and moral pollutions of all descriptions which abound among the tribes and nations that are ignorant of the living and true God. So that idolatry may be considered as *a comprehensive summary* of every species of malignity, impiety, and wickedness.

It was for this reason that the children of Israel were separated from the nations around, and so strictly interdicted from the least intercourse or communion with idolaters. So "jealous" was the God of Israel in reference to idolatry, that the least approach to such worship, either in word or action, or even in imagination, was pointedly forbidden:—"In all things that I have said unto you be circumspect; *make no mention of the* NAME *of other gods*, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do after their works, but thou shalt utterly overthrow them and quite break down their images; ye shall destroy their altars and cut down their groves. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; for they will turn away thy son from following me, and the anger of the Lord will be kindled and destroy thee suddenly."*

If idolatry had not been strictly forbidden and undermined, the knowledge and the worship of the true God would never have been established in the earth. In accordance with these injunctions, the first and fundamental precept of the moral law was given, which has a reference not only to the Jews, but to all the inhabitants of the world, "*thou shalt have no other gods before me;*" and the *second*, which forbids any visible representations of Deity, has this strong and impressive sanction, "for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth gene-

* Exod. xxiii. 13, 24, &c. Deut. vii. 3, &c.

ration of them that hate me." For this reason, likewise, the nations of Canaan were devoted to utter destruction. For they not only worshipped a multitude of strange gods, but offered human victims on their altars, and sacrificed even their sons and daughters to devils; and such practices led to adultery, incest, sodomy, bestiality, and other kindred crimes, by which these nations were distinguished; so that, by these abominations, they rendered themselves unworthy of a place within the precincts of terrestrial existence; they were blotted out as a stain upon the creation of God; and their doom was intended as an awful warning to the Israelites, of the evil and danger of turning aside from the true God to idolatry. Hence the curses and denunciations that were threatened against the least tendency of the heart to idol-worship. "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place." "Every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, who separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me, I the Lord, will answer him by myself, and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and *I will cut him off from the midst of my people*, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah."* Hence the *punishment of death* which was uniformly denounced and inflicted upon the idolater. "If there be found among you man or woman that hath gone and served other gods and worshipped them, either the sun or moon, or any of the host of heaven; then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, and shalt stone them with stones till they die."† Such denunciations may be seen running through the whole of the prophetical writings in reference to Israel; and almost every judgment of God, either threatened or inflicted, is ascribed to the abounding of idolatry, and the sins connected with it, as its procuring cause.

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* Deut. xxvii. 15. Ezek. xiv. 7, 8. † Deut. xvii. 2, 5.

These circumstances, therefore, may be considered as stamping upon idolatry a higher degree of opprobrium and malignity than upon any other crime; and consequently, as representing the idolater as the most depraved and degraded of human beings. We are, therefore, apt to recoil from such a character, as one who labours under a peculiar mental and moral derangement, in virtually denying the first principle of human reason, and "the God that is above"—as one whom we would almost shudder to receive into our company, and would think unworthy to enjoy the common sympathies of human creatures. But, wherein lies the great difference between "the covetous man who is an idolater," and him who falls down to Moloch or Juggernaut, or worships the sun, and moon, and the host of heaven? There is the same mental derangement, the same malignity of affection, and the same dethronement of God from the heart, in the former case as in the latter, though they are manifested by different modes of operation. Let us consider, for a little, the resemblance between these two modes of idolatry.

Covetousness may be considered in two points of view: as consisting either in the inordinate love of money *on its own account*, or in the love of those *sensitive gratifications* which it procures; and in both these respects it may be shown to partake directly of the nature of idolatry. In what does the essence of idolatry consist, but in the estrangement of the heart from God, and setting up, in competition with him, any other object, as the *supreme* object of our affections and the ultimate end of all our pursuits? While the pious soul joins in unison with the Psalmist, and says, "whom have I in heaven but thee, O Lord, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee;" the covetous man says of his gold, "thou art my hope, and to the fine gold, thou art my confidence. I rejoice, because my wealth is great and my hands have gotten me much." And such mental idolatry is no less irrational and hateful in the sight of the Most High, than that of the blinded pagan who prostrates himself before a block of wood or the figure of a crocodile.

Pagan idolatry consists either in worshipping the sun,

moon, or stars, or in paying homage to a statue of gold or silver, brass or stone. Mental idolatry consists in paying a similar homage to gold and silver, either abstractly considered, or to those sensual objects and pleasures which they are the means of procuring. The idolater bows down before the shrine of a splendid image; perhaps one formed of the richest materials, such as the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, in the plain of Dura, which was ninety feet high, and contained a thousand Babylonish talents of gold, or about four millions of British money. To this splendid image he pays his homage in the midst of assembled multitudes, and at the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music. The glittering pomp and splendour of such a scene fascinates his affections and overpowers his reason, so that he may be led for a moment to imagine that it is a fit representation of the unknown God. But the covetous idolater worships an image, or an imaginary *idea*, still more degrading. He adores, or, in other words, *he concentrates his affections* upon a circular piece of gold which he can carry in his pocket, or a thousand such pieces tied up in a bag, or locked in his coffers. On such objects his mind incessantly broods, even when they are not present to his senses; and when he is deprived of them by any accident, he is overwhelmed with anguish, and exclaims in despair, "my gods are taken away, and what have I more?" There can be no *essential* difference between gold and silver shaped into statuary, adorned with splendid trappings, and set up for the worship of Pagan nations, and the same metals shaped into the form of guineas, crowns, and dollars, to which a similar homage is paid by the inhabitants of an enlightened land. The *forms* of the idol and the *modes* of adoration are somewhat different; but the *idolatry*, in all its main points and bearings, is substantially the same. Which of these species of idolatry, then, is most irrational and debasing? There can no apology whatever be made for idol-worship, in any shape or under any circumstances. But, in the case of the Pagan idolater, there may be certain extenuating circumstances. The ignorance and superstition in which

he has been trained from early life, the opinions of his relatives and of society around him, the strong prejudices and the numerous associations connected with the religion of his country, the importance he has been taught to attach to his superstitious rites, and the apparent splendour of the idol he adores, and of the ceremonies connected with its worship, might lead us to commiserate, while we cannot but condemn, the idolatrous heathen. We might almost cease to wonder that a rude savage should mistake the glorious sun in the firmament for his Almighty Maker, and the silver moon and the radiant stars for the ministers of his kingdom. When we consider the splendours they exhibit, the light they diffuse, and the general utility of their influence on terrestrial objects, we can scarcely be surprised that fallen reason should have mistaken them for their Divine Original. But what sympathy can we feel, or what apology can we make for those who are trained in a civilized and Christian country, who are freed from Pagan prejudices, who have the free use of their reasoning powers, and who have been instructed in the existence and attributes of an Almighty and Eternal Being, and yet practice an idolatry even more degrading than that of the *Lama* of Thibet, or of the most untutored savage? "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid! For my people (saith God) have forsaken the fountain of living waters,—hewn out to themselves broken and empty cisterns, and have gloried in their shame."

The other species of covetousness—namely, that which consists in gratifying the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, while God is banished from the heart, partakes no less of the nature of idolatry, than that which consists in the love of *money*, abstractly considered. He who is incessantly engaged in the pursuit of money for the purpose of increasing the extent of his property, living in luxury and splendour, dashing along in his chariot, holding intercourse with the higher ranks of society, spending his time in fashionable diversions, or in laying up a fortune for his descendants, to render them independent, while he has no higher ends or aims, is as much an idol-

ater as the votary of Bacchus, or the worshipper of Baal. For, if such pursuits be considered as the great ends of our existence; if they occupy the greatest share of our thoughts and affections; if our chief happiness is placed on the enjoyments they afford; if every thing else is estimated only in so far as it contributes to such ends, and "if we *trust* in the abundance of our riches, and make not God our confidence," we frustrate the great ends for which we were brought into existence, and are guilty of every thing that enters into the *essence* of idolatry. The first duty of every rational creature is to love God *supremely* and affectionately, to render him the highest homage of our hearts, and to serve him throughout every period of our existence, in preference to every other object or being. In this manner we testify that he is Divinely Great and Excellent, worthy of our highest reverence and regard, and that we are under obligations to Him for every enjoyment we possess. Angels, and the holy inhabitants of all worlds, are obedient to his laws, and make his glory the great end of all their actions. They bow in cordial submission to his allotments, "they do his pleasure and hearken to the voice of his word," and he is the supreme object of their affection and adoration. But, when we permit any other object to occupy our supreme regard, affection or esteem, we virtually dethrone Jehovah from our hearts, and banish him from his own universe. "If we make gold our hope, and fine gold our confidence," if the favour of the great, the honour that cometh from men, the vain pageantry of life, the richness of our dress, the elegance of our furniture, the independence of our fortune, and the greatness of the inheritance we provide for our children, are the objects that stand highest in our affections; these are the gods at whose shrine we worship, and whose attributes we adore. In so doing, we are guilty of the grossest *falsehood;* for we practically deny that Jehovah is possessed of those attributes, which demand the highest tribute of homage and affection from his intelligent offspring. We are guilty of *injustice;* for we violate the rightful claim of the Deity to the obedience of rational agents,

and render to creatures the service and regard which is due to Him alone. We are guilty of the basest *ingratitude;* for, to his Power and Wisdom we owe our very existence, and to his boundless Benevolence, all the rich variety of comforts we enjoy. In short, by such conduct, we give evidence that pride, rebellion, selfishness, hatred of moral excellence, and all their kindred emotions rankle in our breasts, and sway their sceptre over all our moral faculties.

This sin is not only peculiarly malignant in itself, but *lies at the foundation of every other species of impiety and wickedness.* The commencement of moral turpitude in any intelligent being, wherever existing throughout creation, is found in the alienation of the heart from God, and the preference of any other object to the Eternal Jehovah. Hence the fall of Lucifer, and the malignity of his designs, and the dismal effects which have followed in the moral order of our terrestrial system; and hence the anxiety which this arch enemy of the moral universe displayed in order to tempt the Saviour of the world to *covetousness, ambition,* and *distrust* in the care of Divine Providence. In proportion as this spirit prevails, will wickedness of every kind reign triumphant. Wherever God is acknowledged, and loved, and adored, all divine virtues flourish and shed their benign influence. But wherever the affections are alienated from the original source of felicity, every heavenly virtue declines and dies, and its place is usurped by every species of moral abomination.

Hence the monstrous iniquities and cruelties, flowing from their religion, which have distinguished every nation of the heathen world. As they had gods of all descriptions and characters; as almost every being, real or imaginary, was included in the list of deities; as every degree of stupidity, folly, impurity, revenge, and other species of moral turpitude, was attributed to such beings, —so the moral conduct of their votaries corresponded with the character of the idols at whose shrines they paid their adorations. Hence the unnatural *cruelties* connected with their worship; the various species of torture

enjoined for obtaining remission of sins; the thousands of human victims which have bled and are still sacrificed on their altars; the murder of female infants as soon as they breathe the vital air; the burning of widows on the bodies of their deceased husbands; the crushing to death of the worshippers of Juggernaut, and the want of humanity and natural affection which forms a striking characteristic of the rites of Paganism. Hence the spirit of daring *falsehood* displayed in their lying oracles and modes of divination, their pretended cures of diseases, their selection of human victims, their representations of the future world, their fallacious predictions, dreams, and visions, which pervade the whole of their mysteries and systems of mythology. Hence the obscene pollutions and abominations incorporated with the ceremonies of idolatry, by which both matrons and virgins, with the most revolting rites, are consecrated in an idol-temple, to a life of impurity and prostitution; and hence the wars of revenge and devastation, with all the enormities, immoralities, and revolting atrocities, which have followed in their train.

Now, the *idolatry* of covetousness; *as having its origin in the same alienation from God*, and the same depravity of the affections, is the source of similar evils and immoralities, wherever its influence extends, as appears from certain facts and illustrations already stated, and which I shall more particularly elucidate under another department of this subject. When the objects on which the mind is fixed, are low, debased, and impure; and when they are connected with pride, falsehood, ingratitude, inhumanity and injustice, being destitute of higher conceptions and nobler aims, it conforms all its views and affections to the character of such objects, and, therefore, nothing can flow forth in the conduct but what is immoral and impure. God is the sun of the human soul, and of every intelligent being. Wherever he displays his radiance, there is moral day, spiritual life, and holy energy; and, under his quickening beams, every divine virtue springs up with vigour and beauty. But, where the light of this divine Luminary is excluded, and the

eyes of the understanding shut to its glorious excellencies, darkness and desolation ensue; a moral winter chills every faculty, and the genuine fruits of righteousness can never appear. And hence the world has become little else than a suburb of Pandemonium, the greater part of its inhabitants "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, maliciousness, envy, deceit, and malignity;" and bearing the character of "backbiters, haters of God, proud, boasters, covenant-breakers, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful. Who knowing the judgment of God; that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Again, *covetousness bears another resemblance to idolatry, in that it is essentially connected with* ATHEISM.

Idolatry, strictly speaking, is not atheism; for it recognizes the existence of superior beings as the objects of adoration. But, although in theory, there appears a shade of difference, it is substantially the same, *as to all its practical results.* For, in banishing the idea of the *true God* from the understanding and the affections, it virtually deposes the Divinity from the universe; and all the immoralities and enormities which would flow from atheism, were its influence universal, result from heathen idolatry, wherever it abounds. The same thing may be said of covetousness: it is virtually, and to all intents and purposes, a species of atheism. For, if atheism throws off all confidence in God, and trust in his Providence, so does covetousness in all its multifarious transactions. Look at the man whose highest object is to make a fortune, and to fill his coffers with gold. He devotes his time, his affections, the powers of his understanding, and his acquired knowledge and experience, with a steady and persevering aim to secure this ultimate end. He sits all day long in his shop or counting-house, poring over his legers, examining his bills and securities with unremitting attention; devising plans of profit, selecting every mean that ingenuity can suggest, and seizing on every opportunity, however deceitful the means employed, for

driving a profitable bargain, and increasing his store. No hopes transport him but the prospect of gain, and no fears torment him but the risk of loss, except, perhaps, the chance of accidents or the fear of death. When he has placed his treasures in proper security, whether in his bags or coffers, in the bank or the stocks, in title deeds or books of registration, he feels himself as inde pendent upon God, and the movements of his Providence, as if a Supreme Moral Governor had no existence. Without such securities, he feels no more dependence on an Invisible Power, than the confirmed and avowed atheist. I appeal to every one who knows the world, and to the consciences of multitudes, if there are not thousands of characters of this description in the church, the state, and every department of the commercial world. And what is the great difference between such dispositions and conduct, and downright atheism? Suppose the idea of a Deity to be a mere chimera, and the notion of his existence forever banished from their thoughts, would their conduct be much altered, or would it be altered in the least? except perhaps that they would deem it unnecessary, in compliance with custom, to attend the external forms of worship. Would they be more griping, deceitful or penurious, more eager and persevering to lay up treasures on earth, and to add house to house and field to field, or trust more confidently in their riches, or feel more independent of a Supreme Being, than they do at present? It cannot be supposed; for they have already carried these propensities and practices to the highest pitch, which their ingenuity and energies would permit; and therefore, the existence or non-existence of the Deity may be considered in relation to such characters, as a matter of mere indifference. Their wealth stands to them in the place of God, on which they depend, and to which they look as the fountain of their enjoyments, and the foundation of all their future prospects, both for themselves and their descendants. Even although the whole course of nature were deranged, the earth turned into a dry and parched desert, "the windows of heaven" never opened to pour down fruitfulness upon the earth,

and, consequently, money cease to be of any utility for procuring the means of enjoyment; still, such are the associations connected with this irrational propensity, that they would cling to gold and silver, and houses and landed property as their darling object, "their high tower and rock of defence."

The same things may be affirmed in regard to those who covet money for the sole purpose of self-gratification, and indulging in luxury and sensual enjoyments. They drink of the streams, but forget the fountain. They store up from the rich abundance of nature, whatever treasures they can collect for contributing to their splendour and giving a relish to the pleasures of their senses; but they forget the benevolent operations of HIM "who giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filleth the hearts of men with food and gladness." They buoy themselves up with the idea that *their own* wealth and power and influence have procured them these enjoyments, while they regard not the Hand and Power of that Almighty Being who superintends the minutest agencies of the material system, and who "giveth to all, life and breath and all things." They enjoy the comforts of splendid mansions, and delightful gardens; they relish the juice of the strawberry, the peach, and the nectarine, and regale themselves with the fruit of the vine; but to Him "who giveth them all things richly to enjoy, and to the intimations of his will, they pay no more regard than they do to a breath of wind, or to what is going on in the upper regions of the atmosphere. Now, what would be the difference, in the feelings and practice of such persons, although it could be proved to a demonstration that a Supreme and Eternal Mind had no existence? Although the world had sprung from a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and were going forward through interminable changes without the direction and control of an all-pervading Spirit, and although every individual were to consider himself as a part of an *independent* system of material existence unconnected with mind or moral error, would there be less of true adoration or gratitude to an invisible Creator, or less reliance on a su-

perintending Providence, in the case of such, than there is at present? Would the hunter after places and pensions be more keen in his aspirations after posts of opulence and honour? Would the gambler be more eager in prosecuting his demoralizing pursuits? Would the pride of rank and dress and equipage be carried to a higher pitch than it now is? Would the votary of fashionable dissipation pursue his giddy course with more rapidity and vehement desire? Would there be more horse-racing, cock-fighting, hounding, balls, masquerades, and other frivolous and vicious diversions, or less money bestowed by those who are absorbed in such entertainments for the relief of the widow and the orphan, for the propagation of religion, and for the general improvement of mankind? We have no reason to believe that any *essential* difference would be perceptible in the general pursuits of the worldlings to whom I allude. For, as it is evident, from their governing disposition, and the general train of their conduct, that "God is not in all their thoughts," that "they live without God in the world," and that many of them have already "run to the utmost excess of riot," and licentiousness—so we have no valid reason to conclude, that any considerable change would take place, although they acted on the full belief, that the visible world, and its several elementary parts are all that we have to do with, and all that exists in the universe.

In the train of thought and action of such individuals, there is a certain resemblance to the *atheism*, (if I may so express it) *of the inferior animals.* "The hart panteth after the brooks of water, and quenches its thirst at the flowing stream; the ox browses on the grass, and lies down and ruminates, till he is satisfied; the lion roars after his prey; the goats clamber among the high hills and rocks, the wild deer gambol through the lawn and forests, and the fowls of heaven wing their flight through the air, and rejoice to perch and "sing among the branches."

In such gratifications and exercises, every sentient being finds its peculiar enjoyment, and looks no higher when its wants are supplied and senses gratified. The worldling, too, finds enjoyment in the exercise of his

physical powers, and in the rich and diversified bounties of nature; and the keenness with which he rushes forward to participate of his viands, his delicious wines and other sensual pleasures, bears a certain resemblance to that of the inferior tribes when they rush to their peculiar food or beverage and satiate their desires. But, in both cases, the *physical materials* of the enjoyment, or the pleasures arising from the adaptation of the senses to the objects of external nature, are all that they recognise; while the Great Author of their enjoyments is unheeded and unacknowledged. In the one case, it is owing to the *want* of faculties capable of appreciating the existence and character of a Supreme Benefactor; in the other, to the perversion of rational powers adequate for tracing every comfort to its original source. The one, from the original constitution of its nature, is, so far as we know, incapable of perceiving or acknowledging God; the other "does not like to retain God in his knowledge." He might raise his thoughts to his Almighty Benefactor, if he chose, and acknowledge his bounty; but he chooses to shut his eyes to the evidences of his unceasing agency and beneficence, and to harden his heart against him. Though he has been endowed with more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and made wiser than the fowls of heaven, yet his superior powers have carried him no nearer to the fountain of happiness, than the instinct of the brutes. In short, his atheism is nearly as complete as theirs—with this difference, that while they fulfil their destination and act up to the constitution of their natures, he degrades the moral and intellectual faculties with which he is invested, by rendering them instrumental for promoting sensuality and alienating his heart from God. What a pitiful picture does this representation present of the great majority of our species, and of many even of those who profess the religion of Jesus, and who display a fiery zeal in defence of the Christian church! Alas! that man who is made only a little lower than the angels, and is allied by his intellectual nature with the highest orders of created beings, should thus pervert and prostrate his noble powers, in attempting to banish the Creator from

his own universe, and to deprive him of that gratitude and adoration which are due from all his rational offspring! Such, however, is the atheism of covetousness; and that the conclusions we have deduced are not groundless, appears from the following passage of an inspired writer: "If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold 'Thou art my confidence:' if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much,—if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge; *for I should have denied the God that is love.*"

This subject deserves the serious consideration of every professing Christian. Many who are members of the visible church, and regularly attend the dispensation of its ordinances, because they do not run to the same excess in covetousness as others, or as such characters as we have alluded to above, are apt to imagine that no principles either of idolatry or of atheism lurk in their hearts. They hug themselves in the belief that they love God and man, and desire to deal justly towards their neighbours, while their affections are alienated from God, and their hearts going after their covetousness. "Their riches are their strong city, and as an high wall in their imagination," and their trust in the Most High extends no farther than to the *visible* means of supply which they think their own means and wisdom and industry have provided. There is no mental propensity, or subject, in regard to which men are more apt to deceive themselves than that under consideration. It is the last thing a professed religionist will be apt to suspect, that he is acting on the principles either of atheism or idolatry; and he would consider it nothing short of an insult, were even a suspicion to this effect insinuated. But, it becomes every one, on this point, "to search and try his ways." Let me ask you, O professor of religion, have you never come to the house of God, under the profession of adoring his perfections and giving thanks at the remembrance of his mercy and goodness, while, during almost the whole of

the public services, your thoughts and desires have been wandering abroad among your shops, your counting-houses, your legers, your gains, your losses, your commercial projects, and other objects of covetousness, while "the God in whose hands your breath is, and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified," although "your hands were lifted up in the sanctuary?" Have you not repeatedly, yea times without number, neglected to adore God in your families, and "to show forth his loving kindness in the morning," from your hurry to engage in the bustle of the world, and in the acquisition of gain? Do you seldom or never lift up your hearts to God in the midst of your worldly business, and implore his direction, and his assistance to guard you from worldly-mindedness and every temptation? If your conscience bears witness against you, that such dispositions are indulged, and such duties neglected, you have too much reason to suspect, that your heart is not right with God, and that a principle intimately connected with idolatry, holds the ascendency over your affections. In such a case, it becomes every one to exercise a holy jealousy over himself, and to examine the secret springs of his actions, lest, peradventure, he may be found among those who are "without God in the world." If he is in doubt or perplexity about this important point, he will apply to Him "who searcheth the hearts and reins of the children of men," and will say with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me," and discover it to me, "and lead me in the way everlasting." For if the principles and affections which constitute the essence of idolatry and atheism shall at last be found to have pervaded the heart, and to have been formed into a habit, the doom which awaits the idolater and the atheist will be pronounced by Him who is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," at that solemn day when "he shall come to judge the world in righteousness."

Having dwelt with some particularity on the above topic, I shall take only a cursory view of a few more

particulars connected with this department of the subject.

2. Covetousness is declared to form *an impassable barrier to the kingdom of heaven.*

"Be not deceived," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "for neither fornicators, nor *idolaters*, nor thieves, nor *covetous*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor *extortioners*, shall inherit the kingdom of God." This is the law of the God of heaven—a law which is eternal and immutable—a law more steadfast and unalterable than that of the Medes and Persians. The laws of earthly sovereigns may be changed, or their designs frustrated, but the moral laws of the Most High are absolutely immutable, and no created being can attempt to violate them, and prosper. As soon may we expect to unhinge the fabric of the universe, to toss from their foundations the everlasting mountains, to pull the sun from his place in the firmament, or to quench the stars of heaven in eternal night, as to expect admission into the kingdom of the just, while covetousness holds the ascendency over the heart. For the declaration is *express*, and is repeated in another epistle, and similar declarations are interspersed throughout the volume of inspiration, that "no covetous man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ or of God." Now the laws of God are not to be considered as the dictates of an arbitrary sovereign, but as founded on the nature of things, and the general constitution of the moral world. Although, in some instances, we are unable to perceive the precise reason of certain laws or injunctions, contained in Revelation, yet we may rest assured, that, in every instance, God has *the highest reason* for what he declares, and for what he does; since His wisdom is infinite, and since his eyes comprehend, at one glance, all the objects and relations which exist throughout the universe. In the present case, there are obvious reasons why the covetous must be excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

For, in the first place, *they are unqualified for its enjoyments.* The pleasures of heaven are pure and spiritual

but the pleasures of the covetous are "earthly, sensual, and devilish." The pleasures of heaven flow from a principle of universal benevolence, which pervades the minds of all its inhabitants, and without which it would be a place of misery; but the pleasures of the covetous, if they may be so called, are derived from principles connected with envy, deceit, falsehood, injustice, apathy in regard to the wants and happiness of others, and with almost every species of malignity. It is, therefore, impossible that covetous characters should either contribute to the happiness of fellow-associates in the realms of bliss, or find any enjoyment for themselves in the perpetual exercise of heavenly virtues.

In the next place, they are unqualified for engaging in its employments. Heaven being a social state, and consequently, a scene of moral action, its inhabitants are, of course, perpetually employed in *beneficent services* corresponding to the nature and circumstances of that happy world. As to the nature of some of these services, and the manner in which they are performed, we must necessarily remain in ignorance in our present state. Although, in that world, there are no poor to be relieved, no sinners to be reclaimed, nor distressed to be consoled—there are, doubtless, innumerable ways in which benevolence exerts its noblest energies, in communicating happiness and augmenting the joys of surrounding associates. Angels are "ministering spirits" to the saints on earth, and have, in numerous instances, contributed to their preservation and comfort; and, in the celestial state, "just men made perfect," may, in a thousand ways incomprehensible to us, be ministering spirits to one another. They may deliver lectures to each other on the works and the ways of God—direct the attention of those scenes and objects in which the glory of their Almighty Creator is most conspicuously displayed—relate the history of Divine dispensations towards them in the present state—seize upon every circumstance by which ecstatic joy may be diffused throughout the hearts of each other; and as knowledge is necessarily progressive, even in that world, and in every region of happy existence, the benevolent

principle may be exercised in various ways in communicating and diffusing it among the numerous hosts of heavenly intelligences. But in whatever *benevolent* services "the saints in light" may engage, it is evident that the covetous are altogether unqualified for entering on such employments. They are uncongenial to the train of thought they pursue, and to their leading dispositions. For either *selfishness*, apathy, pride, sensual gratification, or other *malignant* propensities constitute the prominent features of their character; and as these are directly opposed to the benevolence of heaven, such predominating principles must render them entirely unfit for mingling in "the general assembly of the first born whose names are written in heaven," or for taking a part in those labours of love for which they are distinguished.

Some of the other employments of heaven consist in the celebration of the divine perfections. "They worship him who liveth forever and ever," saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." They are likewise engaged in contemplating the glory of the Divine administration in the works of creation and providence, for such is the subject of their song: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." But all such sublime exercises, being uncongenial to the ruling passions and pursuits of avaricious worldlings, could afford them no pleasure; and, consequently, for the reasons now suggested, they must be absolutely unfitted for participating in "the inheritance of the saints in light." And, if they are found *unqualified* for the pleasures and enjoyments of the celestial world, "they *cannot*, 'in the nature of things,' enter into the kingdom of God." They will be banished from that blessed world, not in consequence of any arbitrary decree of the Almighty, but in virtue of the constitution of the intelligent system, and the fundamental laws of the moral universe. And the very circumstance, that they are *unqualified* for relishing the exercises and felicities of the heavenly world, will add

a peculiar poignancy to those bitter reflections which will be felt when they find themselves forever excluded from the New Jerusalem.

What should we think of the degraded worshippers of Juggernaut, who prostrate themselves before the car of that abominable idol—of the priests of Baal, who cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them, and cried aloud, "O Baal, hear us!—of the votaries of Moloch, who threw their children into the burning arms of their idol, while drums beat and trumpets sounded to drown their cries—of the South Sea islanders, who sacrifice human victims to their wooden gods, accompanied with rites the most horrid and obscene; what should we think of such debased and wretched idolaters, with their minds polluted with every moral abomination, being admitted into the society of saints and angels in the upper world. Would they be fit companions of the heavenly inhabitants, or could they join with intelligence and fervour in their sublime and holy employments? The supposition would be utterly repugnant to every idea we ought to form of the associations of heavenly intelligences, or of the arrangements of the Divine government. But, we have already seen, that every covetous man is an *idolater*, with a mind as grovelling and impure, as that of the votaries of Paganism, to whom we have alluded, and, consequently, equally unfitted for the society of blessed spirits in the mansions above.

The same impressive truth was announced by our Saviour, when he commanded the young man who enquired the way to eternal life, to sell all that he had and give to the poor, and come, and follow him! "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God." And again; "I say unto you, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." These declarations plainly imply the following things: 1. That a rich man, considered as such, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, one who "*trusts* in his riches," cannot be admitted into the kingdom of God; for such a trust

partakes of the nature of idolatry, which necessarily excludes its votaries from the celestial kingdom. 2. That it is *extremely difficult* for a man who abounds in wealth and has large possessions, not to trust in such uncertain riches, and to bring his mind to submit to the self-denying requisitions of the gospel, so as to be ready to resign his worldly treasures, when the laws of the gospel kingdom require it. The truth of this is apparent in the comparatively small number of rich men who have devoted themselves to the cause of evangelical religion, as humble and self-denied followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. There are men at this moment in the higher places of society, abounding in riches, ten times more than sufficient for all the lawful purposes of sensitive enjoyment, whom it would be as difficult to induce to give the *tenth* part of their incomes, for the support and propagation of true religion, as it would be to drain the caverns of the ocean, or to hurl the mountains from their bases, and toss them into the depths of the seas, notwithstanding their pretended zeal for the external interests of the church.

Such is their pride, and their attachment to the pomp and splendours of wealth, that nothing short of Divine power could detach their hearts from trusting in their uncertain riches, and induce them "to count all things but loss that they may win Christ." Such is the powerful influence of wealth and external grandeur over the human heart, that none but those who have attained a strong and permanent conviction of unseen and eternal realities, can look down upon them with becoming indifference or contempt. And this consideration should form a powerful argument to the lower ranks of society, to encourage them to submit with contentment to the allotments of Providence, for their circumstances do not expose them to the same temptations as the rich to neglect the gospel and those things which belong to their eternal peace. Were the riches, after which they are sometimes apt to aspire, to be granted them, it might prove, as it has often done, the greatest curse that can befal them, and lay the foundation of their eternal ruin.

"For they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."

3. Covetousness is *inconsistent with the idea of our being redeemed by the blood of Christ.*

The apostle Peter declares, in reference to all Christians, that "they are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And he brings forward this consideration as an argument against worldly lusts, and in support of universal holiness, that, "as obedient children, we ought no longer to fashion ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance; but as he who hath called us is holy, so we ought to be holy in all manner of conversation." And Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, declares, that one end of the death of Christ is, "*that he might deliver us from this present evil world*," and consequently, from all its covetous affections and lusts. The work of our redemption is one of the most astonishing displays of Divine perfection, and the most glorious manifestation of Divine love towards the sons of men. Preparations for its accomplishment were going on in every preceding period of the world. Prophets, in different ages, were raised up to announce it; the ceremonial law was instituted, and thousands of victims were slain on the Jewish altars to prefigure the sufferings of Messiah and the glory that should follow; the various events of Providence, the rise of empires, the fall of kings, and the revolutions of nations, were all directed in such a manner as to accomplish the purposes of the Almighty, and to bring about that great event—the death of Christ—in all the circumstances in which it actually happened. Celestial messengers descended from heaven to earth to announce the birth of the Saviour to man; a series of august and striking miracles, such as had never before been exhibited, gave attestation of the Divine mission of the promised Messiah; and at length, our great High Priest humbled himself, and became obedient to the death

of the cross, when the sun was darkened in his habitation, the earth did quake, the rocks rent, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the graves were opened, and many of their inhabitants arose to life. Our Redeemer at length burst the bonds of death, arose to an immortal life, ascended to heaven amidst a choir of angels, and is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The great end of all these solemn preparations in prophecies, in providences, in sacrifices, types, and shadows, and of the astonishing events which have accompanied and followed the death of Christ, was *to counteract sin* in all its various bearings and aspects—to emancipate the soul from the thraldom of the world and its affections and lusts, and "to purify" for the service of God, "a peculiar people zealous of good works."

Now, it is evident, that such noble designs would be entirely frustrated, were a principle of covetousness to hold the ascendency over the human mind, however fair a character its votaries might exhibit in the sight of men. If we are not determined to "mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts," and to make God the supreme object of our desires and affections; if, on the contrary, we are determined to give loose reins to avaricious propensities, to make wealth and grandeur, and worldly honours and distinctions the chief object of our pursuit, then Christ "has died in vain" with respect to us, and we have no interest, and ought to claim no interest in the benefits which he died to procure. It is presumption in the highest degree, for any man to claim an interest in the blessings of salvation, whose conscience tells him that this world and its enjoyments are uppermost in his affections. For, can we for a moment suppose, that the Most High God would form a design which is the admiration of angels, that the most solemn preparations should be made for its accomplishment, that all the events connected with his moral administration should be so arranged as to have a special bearing upon it, that the laws of nature should be suspended and controlled, and a series of astonishing miracles displayed, that the Prince of Life would suffer

the agonies of an accursed death—that He "who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, should take upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient to the death of the cross;" that angelic messengers should take so deep an interest in such transactions, and wing their flight from heaven to earth in embassies connected with such events —can we suppose that such an astonishing train of events would have been arranged and brought into effect, if a principle, which, above all others, has a tendency to estrange the affections from God, were to be permitted to rule in the human heart? The thing is impossible, and, therefore, the covetous, whatever show of religion he may exhibit, cannot, with any consistency, lay claim to any of those eternal blessings which the Son of God came into the world to procure; since those effects which his death was intended to accomplish, have never been produced on his heart.

4. Covetousness *is inconsistent with Love to God.*

Love to God is the foundation and the first principle of universal holiness. In every renewed soul it reigns triumphant and supreme. This holy affection includes in it reverence, admiration, humility, and gratitude, and is uniformly accompanied with adoration of the perfections of God, and an unlimited dependence upon him, in reference both to our temporal comforts and our eternal destination. It pervades the hearts of all holy beings wherever existing throughout the amplitudes of creation, and inspires them with permanent and rapturous delight. It assimilates us to angels and other pure intelligences, and prepares us for associating with them and bearing a part in their labours of universal benevolence. Hence, we find, that this sacred emotion has formed the distinguishing characteristic of the saints in every age. We find the spirit of the Psalmist, in his devotional exercises, continually rising towards God, as his hope and confidence and the source of his felicity: "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. As the hart panteth after the brooks of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My heart

and my flesh shall fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Who in heaven can be compared with the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to Jehovah? Behold as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God. My soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast. Blessed is the man who maketh the Lord his confidence, and whose hope is in the Lord his God."

Throughout the whole range of Divine revelation such sentiments are expressed, and such affections displayed by the people of God. But is it possible to be conceived, that either the niggardly miser or the vain worldling can enter into the spirit of such sublime sentiments, or elevate his soul to such holy affections, however much he may attempt to mimic the external forms of devotion? Though he should affect humility by bowing down his head like a bulrush, and profess to join in adoration of the Most High, "in the place of the holy," yet God is not in all his thoughts, "and his heart is still going after his covetousness." Those eternal respects which are due to God, and that hope and confidence which his people repose in his perfections, are to him altogether unheeded and unknown. The world, with its riches and splendours, is the deity which he worships, while the attributes of the true God are seldom present to his mind. While the true Christian exclaims with exultation, "Thou art my *portion*, O Lord, therefore will I trust in thee," the worldling overlooks the Eternal Source of felicity, and "trusts in the abundance of his riches." While the Christian hopes in God for every thing requisite to his happiness, both in the life that now is and in the life to come, the worldling makes "*gold* his hope, and says of the fine gold, 'Thou art my confidence.'" While the Christian, in the view of every calamity that may befal him, boldly declares, "God is my refuge and strength, my high tower and fortress, a pre-

sent help in the time of trouble;" on the other hand, "the rich man's *wealth* is his strong city, and a high wall in his own conceit." Hence, the love of riches and the love of God, are altogether incompatible; and hence the positive declarations and injunctions of scripture on this head: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Such declarations are plain and explicit, and ought forever to set at rest the question—whether covetousness and the love of God be consistent with each other?—whatever form, either of avarice or ambition, the covetous principle may assume. And if covetousness is inconsistent with love to God, it necessarily excludes those who are under its influence from a participation of the joys of heaven. For the inhabitants of that world have their minds completely pervaded with this sacred principle, in testimony of which "they cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." "Blessing and honour, and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever."

5. The evils of covetousness, and its inconsistency with religion, appear from *the numerous cautions and exhortations delivered in Scripture on this subject.*

Our Saviour frequently took occasion to admonish his disciples and the multitudes who attended him, on this point: "*Take heed,*" said he, "*and beware of covetousness;*" and he enforces the admonition from this argument, "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" that is, neither the happiness of our present existence, nor the *continuance* of that existence, depends upon the abundance of earthly riches. For a moderate portion of them will suffice for all the purposes of human enjoyment; and where great riches are possessed, they usually bring along with them encum

brances, snares, and temptations, which foster vicious lusts, and affections, and not unfrequently lead men into destruction and perdition. Besides, they form no security against the diseases and accidents of life, from which nothing can secure us but the providential care of our heavenly Father. They cannot shelter us from the stroke of lightning, the shock of an earthquake, the fury of a hurricane or tempest, from palsy, consumption, sickness, or the hand of death. In regard to such accidents and diseases, the poor man is as secure as the rich. Our Saviour illustrates this truth by a very striking example; "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he reasoned within himself, saying, what shall I do; for I have not room to store up my crops. And he said, this will I do; I will pull down my old barns and build larger ones, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, thou hast abundance of goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" How often is this impressive representation realized, in the case of worldly men who abound in wealth and are not rich towards God! How many are there at this moment as deeply engaged in ambitious schemes of hoarding or aggrandizement as the fool in the parable, to whom God will, in a few weeks or months, or perhaps this very night, declare, by the voice of his Providence, "Thy soul is required of thee." The sin of the rich fool, denounced in this parable, did not consist so much in his being a niggardly miser, or being altogether void of charity to the poor; for none of these things are charged against him; but it consisted chiefly in his forgetfulness of God, and want of dependence upon him—in an irreligious presumption and confidence in himself, imagining that he had a sufficient security in his own hands against the accidents and calamities of life, and forgetting that the continuance of his existence depended upon the will and the power of his Creator. This is the natural tendency of riches when not counteracted by a principle of religion; and it is this

tendency which renders riches so dangerous to their owners, so that a man who has any regard to his eternal interests, ought rather to *fear* lest riches should be forced upon him, than to make them the object of his pursuit.

There are numerous injunctions of this kind interspersed throughout the Scriptures; but instead of illustrating them separately, I shall only select a few passages which bear upon this subject, recommending them to the serious attention of every professing Christian.

The following are some of those passages which denounce the sin of covetousness, the vanity of riches, and the dangers which attend them. "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied—then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, and say in thine heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.* The wicked hath swallowed down riches, but he shall vomit them up again. God shall cast them out of his belly. In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits; when he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him while he is eating. Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.† Deliver my soul from the mass of the world who have their portion in this life. Every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them. They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, cannot by any means redeem their brother, or give to God a ransom for him. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him to the grave.‡ These are the

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* Deut. vii. 11—17. † Job xx. 15, 22 and xxvii. 16, 17.
‡ Psalm xviii., xxxix., xlix.

ungodly who prosper in the world and increase in riches. Lo, this is the man who made not God his confidence, but trusted in the abundance of his riches. If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them. Riches profit not in the day of wrath. Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels, because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity. Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished. There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches. Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasures and trouble therewith. An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed. Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away.* There is one alone, and not another, yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet there is no end of his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, for whom do I labour and bereave my soul of good; this is also vanity. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase. Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field till there be no place, &c. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. He that getteth riches and not by right shall leave them in the midst of his days, and in the end shall be a fool."†

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Take no anxious thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Woe unto you who are rich, for ye have received your conso-

* Psalm lii. lxii. Ezek. vii. 19. Prov. xi. xiii. xv. xx. &c.
† Eccles. iv. 8; v. 10. Isa. v. 8. Jer. ix. 23; xvii. 11.

lation. Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger: woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Verily I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God. What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Take heed and beware of covetousness. Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life."* "Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. The time is short; it remaineth that they who buy, be as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away. Let not covetousness be once named among you, as becometh saints; for this ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Set your affections upon things above, and not on things on the earth. Mortify therefore your members—inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have."† "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts that drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches; but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. Go to, now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; where-

* Matt. vi. 19; xvi. 26; xix. 21. Luke vi. 24; xii. 15; xxi. 34, John vi. 27.

† Rom. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. vii. 30. Ephes. v. 3. 2 Cor. vi. 10. Col. i. 2. Heb. xiii. 5.

as ye know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapour that soon passeth away. Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them who have reaped, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. They are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."*

Such are a few of those divine admonitions, interspersed throughout the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, which are addressed to us on the subject of covetous affections and worldly grandeur. They are the solemn and explicit declarations of Him who hath all power and authority in heaven and on earth, and by whom the actions of men are weighed; and, therefore, they ought to sink deep into the heart of every professor of religion, and be pondered with the most profound seriousness and attention. If they produce a *suspicion* that the covetous principle lurks within, every one of them ought to strike the mind, as if it were spoken from the heavens in a peal of thunder, and to alarm the convicted worldling to flee from the wrath to come. For such declarations not only set before us our duty in the plainest terms, but pronounce the present and everlasting doom of every one who allows his affections to be enthralled with the riches of the world, and who passes into the eternal state under their malign influence. In such passages of sacred writ, the intimations of our duty and our danger in regard to wealth, are as clear and perspicuous as words can make them, and set aside every doubt in regard to the inconsistency of covetousness and religion. And, therefore, every man who makes a religious profession, if he will but take a moment's leisure to examine

* 1 John ii. 15. 1 Tim. vi. 9. James iv. 14; v. 1. Philip. iii. 9.

his own heart, and his train of affections, and to compare them with the declarations of our Lord and of his holy prophets and apostles, will at once perceive his true state and character before God. Yet it is amazing, how easily men flatter and deceive themselves on this point. Nothing, perhaps, is more difficult than to make an impression upon the minds of those whose affections have been long riveted to earthly objects. In many cases, you might as soon expect to cut through the Alpine rocks with a quart of vinegar or the stroke of a razor, as to cut a passage through the adamantine hearts of the covetous, by any arguments or denunciations which the reason of man, or the word of God can suggest. We have a most striking example recorded in the Gospel of Luke, of the inefficacy of Divine admonition and instruction on this subject, even when delivered by the highest authority. Our Saviour, in the presence of a multitude of Pharisees, publicans, and sinners, spake a parable, intended to convince his hearers, of the necessity of making a right use of their worldly enjoyments; and he enforced his instructions by the consideration, that if they should employ their wealth in purposes of piety and benevolence, at the hour of death, they would receive their reward, in being introduced "into everlasting habitations." He concluded his discourse with these emphatic words: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other; *ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" Immediately after which, we are told that, "the Pharisees who were COVETOUS, *heard of all these things, and they derided him.*"* Instead of opening their minds to receive the admonitions of heavenly wisdom, which were so appropriate to their characters, the instructions of the divine Saviour rebounded from their hearts, as an arrow from a wall of adamant. Instead of retiring to commune with their own hearts, and to reflect with seriousness on the admonitions they had received, they sneered with contempt at the Great Instructor, as if he had been a visionary who

* See Luke xvi. 1—14, compared with chap. xvii.

did not understand the nature of human enjoyments, and who despised wealth only because he could not acquire it. They were as fixed in their avaricious principles and resolutions, as a rock in the midst of the tempest, and were determined to pursue their courses at all hazards, whatever might be the consequence, and they are now reaping the rewards of their unrighteousness. We have too much reason to fear that, in the present day, there are in the visible church, multitudes of characters as hardened in their covetousness as the ancient Pharisees. And, therefore, it becomes every one to exercise a holy jealousy over his heart in regard to this deceitful, hardening and soul-ruining propensity. "For many strong men have been wounded and cast down" by it; many who entered on active life, giving high hopes of their Christian attainments, have, through the influence of worldly cares, and worldly grandeur, made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, disgraced their profession, conformed themselves to the corrupt maxims and pleasures of the world, and fallen into many snares and temptations which drown men in destruction and perdition. O that every one would ponder aright these emphatic words of our blessed Saviour: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE EVILS WHICH FLOW FROM COVETOUSNESS.

While the rational and pious distribution of wealtn might be made the source of innumerable benefits to mankind, the inordinate "love of money," we are told, "*is the root of all evil.*" There is scarcely a moral evil connected with the present or past condition of the human race, but may be traced, in a greater or less degree, to this unhallowed affection. It has even exerted a powerful influence in producing the greater part of those *physical* evils which are felt in every land, and among every rank of society. Were we, therefore, to attempt a full illustration of this topic, it would be requisite to take a review of the state of the human race in every age, and to write a history of wars and devastations, and of the animosities and contentions, the sorrows and sufferings of mankind,—so that, instead of a few pages, many volumes would be requisite for recording the revolting details. But, as it is not necessary in the present essay to enter into details, I shall advert, in a concise manner, only to a few prominent particulars.

1. As covetousness naturally leads to dishonesty, so *the covetous man is, to all intents and purposes, a thief and a robber.*

In the first place, *he robs his Maker.* This might appear a very odd representation, if we had not the authority of God himself to sanction it. The prophet Malachi, in the name of Jehovah, charges the people of Israel with this crime. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me; but ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." The Jews were commanded to bring certain animals to the altar of burnt offering, to be slain as sacrifices, and a portion of "the first fruits of their increase,"

as a testimony of their dependence upon God and their devotion to his service, that they might honour the Lord with their substance. But, their covetousness, in many instances, induced them to withhold the sacred tribute; and, when they professed to bring their offspring to his altar, instead of bringing the pure and perfect offerings which the law required, they offered polluted bread upon his altar, and brought the blind, the lame, and the sick for sacrifice, which they would have thought unworthy of being presented to their governor. In consequence of such conduct, the curse of God was pronounced on the guilty individuals, and on the priests who winked at such robbery and profanation. "Now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. For ye have profaned my name in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted, and what ye offer thereon, contemptible. Ye brought also the torn, the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering; should I receive this at your hand, saith the Lord? But cursed be the deceiver who hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a Great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." Such were the sacrilegious practices of multitudes of professed worshippers among the Jews, even after they were restored from the Babylonish captivity; and which brought down upon their heads Divine judgments, and the severest curse of the Most High.

The same crimes are still prevalent under the Christian dispensation, though they assume a different form. Both the avaricious miser and the splendid worldling, rob God of his offerings, when they withhold that portion of their substance which he demands for his worship and service. It is true, indeed, that the Deity is, and ever *must* be absolutely *independent* of all his creatures, either in heaven or on earth. Our giving cannot enrich *Him*, nor our withholding impoverish him. All the treasures of the universe

were created by him, and are subject to his sovereign disposal. "Every beast in the forest is his, the fowls of the mountains, and the cattle on a thousand hills; for the world," saith Jehovah, "is mine, and the fulness thereof." But, he has given the world we inhabit, as a *gift* to the children of men, with this reservation, that, while one portion of its treasures is exclusively allotted for the enjoyment of man himself, and another for the inferior animals, a third portion is to be applied for the maintenance of the ordinances of religion, for diffusing divine knowledge throughout the world, and for the purposes of universal benevolence. And this reservation, so far from being a burden, or an oppressive tax, is, in reality, one of the mediums through which happiness is communicated and enjoyed. When man complies with such a requisition, and acts uniformly according to its spirit, he secures to himself the highest honour and happiness of which his nature is susceptible. It assimilates him, in a certain degree, to angels and the higher orders of pure intelligences, who are continually employed in acts of voluntary beneficence. It assimilates him to the Divine Saviour, "who went about doing good," and hath left on record a *Divine maxim*, which deserves to be emblazoned in letters of gold, and engraven on the hearts of all the inhabitants of the universe—"IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE." This is a maxim which is seldom recognized, even by Christians, in all its practical bearings. But were it universally acted upon, it would completely change the character of this world, and transform it from a scene of sin and suffering, into a moral paradise. In heaven, where this noble principle expands and governs the hearts of all its inhabitants, it is one of the chief sources of that "fulness of joy," and those "pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore."

The covetous, therefore, in refusing to recognize, and to act on this divine principle, both violate the commands of God, *rob him of the tithes and offerings he demands*, and prevent themselves from enjoying the felicity of superior natures. The miser robs God, when he either contributes nothing to his service, or such a pitiful sum as

amounts to little short of an insult offered to the cause of religion. The rich worldling who lives in splendour, robs God of his due when he expends fifty guineas on a splendid but useless piece of furniture, a hundred guineas on some trifling amusement, or a thousand pounds to gratify a vain desire after worldly honour or distinction; while he either gives nothing at all, or contents himself with contributing two, five, or ten guineas for the propagation of knowledge and Christianity through the world. When a man who lives in luxury and elegance, who does not hesitate to subscribe hundreds or thousands of pounds to Conservative clubs or Orange societies, or who wastes similar sums in gratifying his pride or his appetites, contributes only such paltry portions of his wealth to the most noble object that can engage the attention of the human mind, he virtually pours contempt on such an object, by placing it in the very lowest ranks, and thus robs his Maker, from whom he derived his wealth, of the tribute which is due for the promotion of His glory.

Every professing Christian, likewise, in whatever station he is placed, when he regards the interests of religion as merely a secondary object, and refuses to come cheerfully forward with a fair proportion of his substance, according as God has prospered him, for promoting the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, must be considered as a sacrilegious robber, depriving the Most High of the tithes and offerings he demands, and consequently subjects himself to the infliction of a *curse*, similar to that which was denounced upon the covetous Jews in the days of Malachi.

In the next place, the covetous man *robs the poor, the distressed, the widow and the fatherless.* He robs them of their enjoyments, by withholding that assistance which is requisite for enabling them to procure the comforts and necessaries of life. The Creator has displayed his boundless liberality in the abundant treasures of the earth and seas, in the ample space afforded for the habitations of man, and for the production of food and the materials for clothing, and in giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, that the hearts of men may be filled with food

and gladness. The earth, if properly cultivated, and its productions impartially distributed, would be more than sufficient to supply every sensitive comfort to *twenty times* the present number of the population of our globe.* Even as matters now stand, there is far more produced from the rivers, the ocean, and the dry land, than is sufficient for the abundant sustenance of man, and every species of animated existence, were it distributed by the hand of equity and beneficence. But covetousness interposes between the Creator and his creatures, and attempts to intercept the streams of Divine Goodness, and prevent them from flowing to every order of his sensitive and intelligent offspring. It either hoards up the treasures of Nature that few may enjoy them, or wastes them in vanity and extravagance, regardless of the privations and sufferings of countless multitudes who are pining in affliction and indigence. Instead of acting as the *Almoners* of the Creator, in distributing the bounties he has put into their hands, the covetous do every thing in their power to *counteract* the incessant operations of Divine Beneficence —and thus *rob* the poor, the distressed and the helpless, of those comforts which his care and providence had provided. They likewise rob them by an unceasing course of injustice and oppression, defrauding them of their rights, and, in the language of Scripture, "grinding the faces of the poor, beating them to pieces, and taking the spoils of the indigent into their houses."†

Again, the avaricious man *robs his own family.* He frequently denies them the comforts of life, and even its necessaries. Though his coffers are overflowing with wealth, and the means of every sensitive and rational enjoyment are within his power, yet his wife and children are virtually sunk into the depths of poverty. Their food

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* Allowing only one fourth of the area of the globe to be capable of cultivation, and that twelve acres of land are sufficient for the maintenance of a family, it is easily proved by calculation, that the earth would support *sixteen thousand millions* of inhabitants, which is about twenty times the number of its present population.

† Isaiah iii. 14, 15.

is mean, and measured out with a sparing hand. Their clothes are of the coarsest stuff, and wear the appearance of the garb of poverty; their education is stinted or altogether neglected, because it would prevent him from adding a few more shillings to replenish his bags and coffers. In short, all their comforts, instead of flowing in copious streams proportionate to his treasures, are measured out to them in the smallest quantities, like the small drops of medicine from an apothecary's phial.

He likewise *robs general society* of those improvements and comforts which he is the means of preventing.

Were it not for avarice, we should have our towns and cities divested of every nuisance, our streets broad and spacious, the light of heaven and the refreshing breeze visiting every dwelling, our narrow lanes demolished, our highways clean and smooth, and adorned with refreshing bowers, asylums for the industrious poor, seminaries for the instruction of all ranks and ages in useful knowledge, and innumerable other improvements for promoting the happiness of the social state. But covetousness interposes and raises an almost insurmountable barrier to the accomplishment of such designs; and, when they are partially effected, in particular cases, it steps in and says, "hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall all improvements be stayed."

In short, he robs every philanthropic society of its treasures, by withholding those gifts which God has put in his power to bestow; and he robs *himself*, by depriving himself of contentment and serenity of mind, and of those external comforts which God has liberally provided for all his creatures. "Although he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet he deprives himself of the power to eat thereof." Such are the robberies commited by every one in whose heart covetousness sits enthroned.

If this species of robbery were viewed, by Christian and civil society, in its proper light, as delineated in the word of God, the covetous extortioner, and the gay worldling would be as much shunned and hissed from

society, as the sharper, the thief, or the midnight depredator.

2. Covetousness uniformly *leads to falsehood and injustice.*

The heart being set upon the acquisition of wealth as its highest object, the worldling seizes upon *every mean* by which it may be acquired. Among these means, falsehood and misrepresentation are particularly conspicuous. When he is buying an article, he endeavours to depreciate its properties and its value; and when he is to dispose of a similar commodity, he overrates its qualities, and attempts to procure a price for it far beyond its worth. If there is a prospect of the price of any commodity rising, he denies that it is in his possession, and if he has a deteriorated article which he wishes to dispose of, he will varnish it over with a fair outside to deceive the unwary. If he is tying up a bundle of quills, he will place four or five in the centre, not half the value of the rest, and thus, he sends forth hundreds of liars with a fair outside, to proclaim as many falsehoods to the world. If he have money in the *stocks*, he will sometimes endeavour to propagate false intelligence to produce their rise or fall, according as he finds it his interest to sell out or to purchase. He misrepresents the state of the markets, and the commodities of his neighbours, in order to enhance his own. When he covets his neighbour's property, he takes the advantage of either poverty or ignorance, and resorts to falsehood and every deceitful mean, in order to obtain it at half its value; and when it comes into his possession, its defects are immediately transformed into valuable properties, and it is rated at a price far superior to its intrinsic worth. In this way, his whole life becomes a course of systematic falsehood; and, if he can accomplish his designs by such means without directly violating the civil laws of his country, he regards himself as a man of uprightness and honesty — although the principle of *truth*, which is the basis of the moral universe, is violated in almost every transaction. And, as he is a liar and deceiver, so he is, almost as a matter of

course, guilty of injustice and oppression. For, instead of relieving the poor and unfortunate, when calamities befal them, he greedily seizes upon such occurrences, in order to acquire the remains of their property at an under value. He drives from their long accustomed dwellings, the industrious cottager, and mechanic, whose ancestors had for generations occupied the same habitation or plot of ground, in order that he may have a chance of adding three or four pounds more to his already overflowing treasures. The bargains he drives, are all *hard*, and the poor who are indebted to him for loans of money, are sure to be fleeced of a double rate of interest. He is generally a usurer who lends to the necessitous, at an exorbitant rate, and when payments have been delayed beyond their proper period, he seizes upon their properties, like a furious wolf, and frequently obtains them at a small fraction of their value. All such acts of oppression, which are direct violations of natural justice, he can commit, and does commit in the open face of day, and hugs himself in the idea that he can do so without directly violating the statute law of his country.

Dr. Reed, in his late "Narrative of a visit to the American Churches," presents a sketch of a female character he met with in one of his journeys, that bears a certain resemblance to what we have now described: "Crowded and almost suffocated [in our vehicle], we had an old lady who did not fail to amuse us. She sat opposite me, and would force a conversation; and as her voice was sharp and shrill, what was meant for me went to all. 'As for religion, she thought one as good as another, if we did our duty; and her notion of duty was to mind our own business. For her part, she had always done so; she ridiculed those who had employed others to do it for them; she could always do hers best for herself; she could make *fifteen per cent.* of money—had small sums out now at fifteen per cent.' She felt that this was not approved. 'Oh! she was not hard with the poor creatures; if they were pressed, she waited, and lent them a little more, so that they could pay at last. She had always been unmarried, not for want of offers, but she

liked her independency, and would resent the offers of any man who would want to get her property.' I remarked, that she had done well not to marry; as a person, like herself, who could do every thing so well, could have no need of a husband. 'Right, right, sir,' she cried, laughing. Then getting thoughtful, she continued: 'But I have a great deal of care, and I often think, I should like to retire and be quiet; and then, I feel as if I could not be quiet, and then I should have no friend. I should want a friend, if I retired, else I could afford it, you know.' 'Oh, I had no doubt of her having a handsome property.' 'Oh no, sir, your joke is very pretty, but I did not mean to say I was rich. I have somewhere or other about 7000 dollars; but I guess that you have more money than all of us put together.' And thus she continued throughout the journey, never embarrassed, always prepared to meet you in reply, and always satisfied with her own shrewdness. She was really a character,—person, features, dress and all, but a most pitiable one. *A great usurer on a small scale;* the love of money had become in her the root of all evil; it made her indifferent to a future world, and destroyed all that was feminine, tender, and benevolent."*

This is truly a graphic picture of an old female miser, whose heart appears to have been long wedded to the Mammon of unrighteousness. Her moral sense appears to have been completely blunted by her love of money; for she appears to have had no impression of the *injustice* of taking fifteen per cent. from "poor creatures." Yet, it is evident, from her declaring that "she had a great deal of care," and from her wish and hesitation about retiring from the world, that she was *an unhappy mortal*, as all such characters must necessarily be. As the doctor would doubtless intersperse in his conversation, some rational and scriptural arguments against covetousness, it is rather a defect in his narrative, that he does not state what impressions they made, or how they were received; for

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*Narrative of a visit, &c. by Drs. Reed and Matthesón, vol. i. pp. 103. 104.

the lady, he informs us, "was always prepared to meet you in reply." Alas! that so many such characters should be found in a Christian land, who think, like this wretched female, that they have done their duty, "when they mind their own avaricious business!"

3. Covetousness *destroys natural feeling* and tenderness of conscience.

There are few vicious dispositions that have a greater tendency to harden the natural feelings of the human heart, and to produce a complete apathy in regard to the wants and sufferings of others, than the inordinate love of money. The tale of woe, the houseless wanderer shivering in rags amidst the blasts of winter, the wants and distresses of the surrounding poor, and the claims of indigent friends and relatives, make no impression on that heart which is encircled, as by a wall of adamant, with the immoderate love of gain. On such a heart, the tears of the unfortunate, and of the widow and orphan, will drop in vain. Its eyes are blind to spectacles of misery, its hands are shut, and its ears deaf to the calls of poverty and the cries of distress. Such unhappy petitioners, instead of meeting with pity or relief, are driven from the door of avarice, with growls and insults, and the haughtiness of a tyrant. Even domestic affliction, and the death of parents, wives, or children, will scarcely affect the heart that is rendered callous by covetousness. Of this we have a striking example, in the case of Edward Nokes, some of the particulars of whose avaricious conduct were formerly stated.* In his younger days, he used, at the death of any of his children, to have a deal-box made to put them in; and, without undergoing the solemn requisites of a regular funeral, he would take them upon his shoulder to the place appropriated for their reception, as if he had been carrying a common burden, or a young pig to the market, and with similar apathy and unconcern. When once deposited in the grave, he appeared to give himself no further thought about the matter, and

* See p. 44.

seemingly coincided with the old maxim, "out of sight, out of mind," and appeared as unconcerned as if nothing had happened. A similar want of feeling seems to have characterised the old American lady, whose features are delineated above. To be "without natural affection," is a disposition which, in the word of God, is ranked with that of "a reprobate mind, maliciousness, envy, murder, and other abominable crimes," and is a plain proof of the *malignity* of the avaricious principle from which it flows. And, as natural feeling is destroyed, so the *conscience is benumbed* by the covetous principle, and even "seared as with a hot iron." Its remonstrances are gradually overcome by the daily increase of the avaricious appetite; and, in the course of time, its "still small voice" is altogether disregarded. Neither the promises nor the threatenings of the divine word, however frequently they may be heard, nor the joys and terrors of the unseen world, can arouse the conscience to a sense of duty or of danger. Such, in many instances, is its insensibility, that all the arguments and motives on the necessity of faith, repentance, and amendment of life, become as ineffectual for awakening consideration, as if they were addressed to the beasts of the forest, or the stones of the field. No situation in which a man can be placed is more dismal and alarming than such a state; and since it is the natural result of inveterate covetousness, it should make every one tremble lest he should be left to fall into those hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

4 Covetousness leads to the indulgence of murderous wishes, and even to murder itself.

As the lives of certain individuals frequently stand in the way of the gratification of the covetous appetite, the avaricious worldling naturally wishes that they may be removed as speedily as possible from the world; and when a relative dies, at whose decease an inheritance is expected, he can scarcely refrain from expressing his satisfaction and joy. Hence the anxiety with which such persons look forward to the death of any one from whom a legacy or an inheritance is to be derived; and hence

the very common expressions of such, in reference to an uncle, an aunt, or even to a parent—"The old fellow has surely lived long enough. When will he get out of the way?" "I wish that old dame who gives away so much money for religion, were safely landed in heaven. If she continues here much longer, I shall have a sorry chance of enjoying her possessions." But covetousness does not always content itself with such unhallowed and diabolical *wishes*. Strong desires and ardent wishes generally lead to corresponding actions. In the presence of the Omniscient, and in defiance of his positive laws and his Almighty power, it not unfrequently takes into its hands the power of life and death, and, by an insidious murder, rids itself of those who were considered as obstacles to its gratification. The poisoned cup is administered, or the sword and blunderbuss prepared, or the assassin hired to poignard or to suffocate the unsuspecting victim, that avarice may glut itself with the wages of unrighteousness and the spoils of violence. Cases of this kind are so numerous that many volumes would not be sufficient to record them. Perhaps it would not be going beyond the bounds of fact to affirm, that one-half of the murders committed in the world have had their origin in this abominable affection. Almost every daily newspaper that comes into our hands contains some revolting details of this description. It is seldom that a week passes in the police offices and other criminal courts in London, in which cases of violence, or of murders, arising from this cause, are not exhibited to public view. And when we consider the secrecy and dexterity with which such atrocious acts are generally conducted, we may easily conceive how many such deeds may be perpetrated unknown to any human being, except the perpetrator, and to which the eye of Omniscience alone is a witness.

Among all ranks of society, such atrocities have been committed. Not only the lower but the very highest order of men have been implicated in the commission of such enormities. Even princes and nobles connected with the British throne, under the influence of avarice and ambition, have committed crimes of this description

at which humanity shudders. Richard III., of England, when duke of Gloucester, and *protector* of England, after the death of his brother, Edward IV., prepared his way to the throne, by causing the Earl of Rivers and other noblemen, who had the charge of the legitimate heirs, to be beheaded, without any trial or form of process, and on the very day in which these men were murdered at Pomfret, he treacherously caused a number of armed men to rush in at a given signal, and seize Lord Hastings, when he was attending a council at the Tower—whom they instantly beheaded on a timber-log which lay in the court. And, when he had, by such atrocities and the basest treacheries, seated himself on the throne, to secure its stability, as he imagined, he hired a principal assassin and three associates, to murder the two young princes, his nephews, whom his brother had committed to his protection. They came in the night time to the chamber where the young princes were lodged. They found them in bed, and fallen into a profound sleep. After suffocating them with a bolster and pillows, they showed their naked bodies to the principal assassin, who ordered them to be buried at the foot of the stairs, deep in the ground, under a heap of stones. But this atrocious monster, notwithstanding the splendours of his court, appeared never afterwards to enjoy repose. His eyes were always whirling about on this side and on that; he was always laying his hand upon his dagger, looking as furiously as if he were ready to strike. By day he had no quiet, and by night he had no rest; but, molested with terrifying dreams, would start from his bed and run about the chamber like one distracted. He enjoyed the fruits of his wickedness only two short years, and was killed at the battle of Bosworth, where his body was found in the field covered with dead enemies and all besmeared with blood. It was thrown carelessly across a horse, and carried to Leicester, amidst the shouts of insulting spectators. How many such murders may have been committed, under the influence of covetousness, by ambitious statesmen, by kings and conquerors, by guardians and wardens, and even by the nearest relatives, God only knows; but history, both

ancient and modern, is full of such revolting details; and such details relate only to such as were detected and exposed to public view. When we seriously consider this dreadful tendency of the covetous and ambitious principle, it should form a powerful motive to every one, and particularly to every professing Christian, for counteracting the *first risings* of such depraved affections. For, if they be harboured and cherished for any length of time, they may lead to atrocities from which the mind would have previously shrunk back with horror. As a few small sparks will sometimes produce an appalling conflagration, so a few covetous affections, nursed and fostered in the heart, may lead to the most appalling murders, and to the destruction of soul and body, both in regard to ourselves, and to the victims of our unhallowed propensities.

5. Covetousness has, in numerous instances, *perverted the administration of the law, and frustrated the ends of public justice.*

Courts of Judicature were instituted for the purpose of dispensing justice between man and man, for punishing the guilty and protecting the innocent; and therefore, those who are appointed to preside in such cases, ought, in an especial manner, to be men of uprightness and impartiality, and inflexible in their adherence to the side of truth and justice. Hence, the propriety of the advice of Jethro to Moses, that, in appointing judges for Israel, he should make choice of "able men who fear God and *hate covetousness.*" Without the fear of God before his eyes, a judge will be liable to be biassed in his decision by selfish and worldly motives, and the influence of proffered bribes. And, how often does it happen that *gold*, or something equivalent to it, turns the scales of justice, and makes them preponderate on the side of iniquity and oppression?—when the cause of the rich is preferred, and the poor deprived of their rights—the innocent condemned, and the guilty acquitted—"the persons of the wicked accepted, and the cause of the widow and the fatherless turned aside!" By such unrighteous decrees in courts of Judicature, the most distressing and melancholy effects

have frequently been produced. Families have been robbed of every earthly comfort, and plunged into the depths of poverty and despair. The stranger and the destitute, the widow and the orphan, have been oppressed and forsaken, and denied the common rights of justice and humanity. The wicked have been left to triumph in their wickedness, while the righteous have been condemned to imprisonment, to exile, or to death. Men of integrity and piety "of whom the world was not worthy," have been doomed to dungeons, to racks, to tortures of every kind, and to be consumed in the flames, while their accusers and judges have been permitted to riot and fatten on the spoils of iniquity. Hence the frequent and pointed declarations of Scripture in reference to judges, "They shall judge the people with just judgment," "Thou shalt not respect persons, *neither take a gift;* for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." "Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty, but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." And hence, the threatenings denounced against the rulers of Israel by the prophet Isaiah: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Thy princes are companions of thieves; *every one loveth gifts,* and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the Lord, the Mighty One of Israel,—Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries and avenge me of mine enemies."*

History, both civil and sacred, is full of examples of this description. We have a striking instance recorded in the first book of Kings, in relation to Ahab, and the vineyard of Naboth. The king desired to have the vineyard to add to the gardens belonging to his palace. But Naboth was prohibited, by the law of Moses, from alienating from his family and posterity, the inheritance of his ancestors. Jezebel the queen was determined, however to effectuate her purpose, and she found ready in-

* Deut. xvi. 18, 19. Exod. xxiii. 6, 9.

struments among the judges of the land, to carry into execution her diabolical scheme. With the basest effrontery and hypocrisy, she wrote letters in Ahab's name to the nobles and the elders of the city in which Naboth dwelt, and hired two "men of Belial" to witness against him that he had "blasphemed God and the king." It is truly lamentable, that, in every age, in all such cases, princes have never wanted instruments to accomplish their most atrocious designs, when they made an appeal to the principle of ambition and avarice. In this case, it would appear, there was not one of all the judges of this city that abhorred such a piece of villany, or was proof against the flatteries and bribes of the wicked Jezebel. For, in obedience to her order, and without the least remonstrance, "they proclaimed a fast," they set the virtuous Naboth "on high among the people," condemned him on the false witness of two atrocious characters, and "carried him forth out of the city and stoned him with stones that he died." And, in order to display their sycophancy to this atrocious woman, and to gratify her pride and revenge—and to show that they deserved her favour for the deed they had committed, they *immediately* sent information to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth is stoned, and is dead." This is but one instance, out of many thousands of similar crimes which have been committed under the show of justice, through the influence of selfishness and avarice. The records of the Inquisition, of the conclaves of popes and cardinals, of the star chamber, of the high commission court, and even of many other courts deemed more just and honourable, by whose decrees, men innocent of any crime, have been fined and imprisoned, robbed of their earthly possessions, tortured with racks and thumb-screws, and doomed to ignominious deaths, would afford ten thousands of striking examples of unrighteous decisions, proceeding from a principle of ambition and covetousness, sufficient to make "the ears of every one that hears them to tingle."

It is related of that pious and upright judge, Sir Matthew Hale, that, when a gentleman who had a cause to be tried at the assizes, sent him a *buck* for his table; as

soon as his name was mentioned, he asked him, "if he was not the same person who sent him venison," and finding he was the same, he told him "he could not suffer the trial to go on, till he had paid him for his buck." To which the gentleman answered, "that he had never sold his venison, and that *he had done nothing to him that he did not do to every judge that had gone that circuit.*" But this excellent judge had learned from Solomon that "a gift perverteth the ways of judgment," and therefore he would not suffer the trial to go on till he had paid for the present: upon which the gentleman withdrew the record.

On another occasion, at Salisbury, the dean and chapter, having, according to the custom, presented him with six sugar-loaves, on his circuit, he made his servants pay for the sugar before he would try their cause. These anecdotes, while they illustrate the uprightness and impartiality of this eminent person, also prove, that it was customary for those who had causes to be tried, to give presents to the Judges of assize; and that, in all probability, they frequently acted under the influence of such bribes.

Another story is told of Judge Hale, in reference to a case between two brothers, the younger of whom had endeavoured to deprive his elder brother of an estate of £500 a year, by suborning witnesses to declare that he died in a foreign land. Under the guise of a *miller*, he was chosen one of the jury on this cause; and as soon as the clerk of the court had sworn in the jury-men, a little dextrous fellow came into their apartment and slipped ten golden Caroluses into the hands of eleven of the jury, and gave the miller five, while the judge, at the same time, was known to be bribed with a great sum. The judge summed up the evidence in favour of the younger brother, and the jury were about to give their assent, when the supposed miller stood up and addressed the court with such energetic and manly eloquence, as astonished the judge and all present — unravelled the sophistry to the very bottom, proved the fact of bribery, evinced the elder brother's title to the estate, from the

contradictory evidences of the witnesses, and gained a complete victory in favour of truth and justice.

The well-known Judge Jeffreys, who was as avaricious as he was unjust and cruel, reduced many innocent victims to beggary, by his rapacious exactions. A gentleman of Devonshire, of the name of Prudeaux, having been thrown into prison, and dreading the severe and arbitrary spirit, which at that time met with no control was obliged to buy his liberty of Jeffreys, at the price of *fifteen thousand pounds*, though he could never so much as learn the crime of which he was accused.

And, as judges have perverted judgment, so advocates and pleaders in courts of justice, under the influence of avarice, have endeavoured to "turn aside the cause of the needy in judgment." How often have such persons, by means of sophistry, misrepresentation, and false eloquence, supported a bad cause, and robbed the fatherless and the widow of their just rights and their dearest enjoyments—while the very moment they were doing so, they were *conscious* of the injustice of their procedure! thus subjecting themselves to that terrible denunciation, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, *that justify the wicked for reward*, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." Nothing is more common, among such persons, than to undertake a cause of any description, however untenable, provided, they are paid for defending it. In opposition to such conduct, which is directly opposed both to reason and the word of God, it is said of Sir M. Hale, that "if he saw a cause was unjust, he would not meddle farther in it; but to give his advice that it was so; if the parties after that were to go on, they were to seek another counsellor, for he would assist none in acts of injustice." "In his pleadings, he abhorred those too common faults of mis-reciting evidence; quoting precedents or books falsely, or asserting things confidently, by which, ignorant juries or weak judges are wrought upon and deceived." Would to God, that all our pleaders were animated by such upright and honourable principles!

6. Covetousness *has transformed many of the ministers of religion into courtly sycophants, and hunters after places of honoar and worldly gain.*

The apostle Peter solemnly enjoins Christian pastors to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." Neither to act as "lords over God's heritage, but to be ensamples to the flock." But, how often do we find that professed ministers of the gospel appear to have a greater respect to the pecuniary rewards of their office than to accomplish the great ends for which it was appointed. Otherwise, how should it ever happen, that men would have the effrontery to receive five, or ten, or fifteen hundred pounds a year, under pretence of "feeding the flock of God," over which they were solemnly appointed, and yet spend their time in fashionable dissipations in distant countries, without ever caring for the souls of their parishioners, or imparting to them the least portion of divine instruction? Such ministers when at any time they do preach to their people, will naturally frame their sermons according to worldly motives, and for selfish designs. If it may promote their secular interests, they will appear like Apostles, full of ardent zeal for the truth and in opposition to error and abounding sins. But, if the doctrines of the cross be not palatable to their fashionable hearers, they will amuse them with Pagan morality, smooth down the threatenings of the divine word, and endeavour to gratify the corrupt humours of their audience. The standard of their religion changes with the changes of the State; and they will not scruple, when their worldly interest is at stake, to defend all that is odious in tyranny, and to extol the most wicked and unprincipled characters. Of this we have a striking example in the case of the Reverend Dr. Shaw, who lived in the time of the protectorship of the Duke of Gloucester, who afterwards usurped the crown, under the title of Richard III. Among other pleas to gain his ambitious designs, Richard attempted to maintain what had not the shadow of a foundation in

truth—that both Edward IV. his own brother, and the Duke of Clarence, were equally illegitimate, and that the Dutchess of York had received different lovers, who were the fathers of these children. Nothing was considered more impudent and unfounded than this assertion, which threw so vile an imputation on his own mother, a princess of irreproachable virtue, and then alive. Yet the place chosen for first promulgating this shamefu falsehood, was the *pulpit*, before a large congregation, in the protector's presence; and a Reverend Doctor of Divinity was base enough to prostitute the sacred office for this purpose. Dr. Shaw was appointed to preach at St. Paul's; and having chosen this passage for his text, "*Bastard slips shall not thrive*," he enlarged on all the topics which could discredit the birth of Edward IV., the Duke of Clarence, and of all their children. He then broke out into a panegyric on the Duke of Gloucester, and exclaimed, "Behold this excellent Prince, the express image of his noble father, the genuine descendant of the house of York; bearing no less in the virtues of his mind, than in the features of his countenance, the character of the gallant Richard, once your hero and favourite; he alone is entitled to your allegiance; he must deliver you from the dominion of all intruders; he alone can restore the lost honour and glory of the nation." Such was a part of the fulsome oration of this *Reverend* sycophant, in favour of a despicable tyrant and atrocious murderer. It was previously concerted, that as the doctor should pronounce these words, the Duke of Gloucester should enter the church; and it was expected that the audience would cry out, "*God save king Richard!*" which would immediately have been laid hold of as a popular consent, and interpreted to be the voice of the nation. But Providence, not unfrequently, turns the schemes of the crafty into foolishness. By a ridiculous mistake, worthy of the whole scene, the Duke did not appear till after this exclamation was already recited by the preacher. The Doctor was therefore obliged to *repeat* his rhetorical figure out of its proper place: the audience, less from the absurd conduct of the discourse, than from

their detestation of these proceedings, kept a profound silence; and the protector and his preacher were equally abashed at the ill success of their stratagem. For, "He who sits in the heavens," and whose eyes "behold the children of men," "holds in derision" all such deceitful schemes, and disappoints the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise."

It is to be hoped, that there are, in our times, few persons connected with the sacred office, who would go all the length with the despicable sycophant to whom I have alluded. But there is no one who reads the daily journals, and has his eyes open to what is passing around him, but must perceive that there are characters within the limits of the British Empire, invested with the office of ministers of the gospel, who make a near approximation in their temper and conduct, to such political parasites. It becomes ministers of religion in general, to be particularly on their guard against such unhallowed propensities, so degrading to the office of ambassadors of Christ, and with the indulgence of which they have been so frequently charged. If their great object be merely "to please men," they "cannot be the servants of Christ;" and, in flattering the great, and pandering to their pride, from ambitious motives, they will be found subjecting themselves to that awful denunciation of our Saviour, "He that is ashamed of me, before men, of him will I be ashamed before my Father and his holy angels." And a more awful situation can scarcely be conceived than that of an ambitious and worldly-minded minister standing before the bar of God, and commanded "to give an account of his stewardship," and of the souls committed to his care. The prospect of such a scene, and its appalling consequences, ought to make every such character *tremble*, if he really believes in a future retribution; and either throw aside all pretensions to the sacred office, or "break off his sins by righteousness," and "flee for refuge from the wrath to come."

In short, what was addressed by the prophet Malachi, in the name of Jehovah, to the priests of the Jews, might be addressed with propriety to many of the ministers of

the New Testament Church, and ought to excite their solemn consideration: "Ye have departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; therefore have I made you contemptible and base before all the people; as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Now, therefore, O ye priests, this commandment is for you—if ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings, yea I have cursed them already because ye do not lay it to heart."

7. Covetousness inclines men *to presumption and self-sufficiency*, as if they could live independently of their Maker, and consequently *leads to a virtual denial of a superintending Providence.*

God is the original source of existence and happiness. On him all creatures, from the archangel to the worm, depend for every enjoyment they now or ever will possess. Throughout every region of the universe; all the laws of nature, and all the movements of the material system connected with these laws, are absolutely dependent upon Him "who spake, and it was done," who gave the command, "and all things stood fast." Consequently all the orders of intelligent beings, wherever existing throughout creation, are every moment dependent upon his superintendence and care, for the continuance of their existence, and for every comfort they enjoy. Were he to withdraw his supporting hand, their existence and enjoyments would cease, the wheels of nature would stop, and the vast fabric of the universe would soon be transformed into one frightful and universal ruin. "For in Him we live and move, and have our being;" his visitation sustains our spirits, and in his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. It is, therefore, one of the first duties of every rational creature, to look up to God for every blessing, to *confide* in him for every earthly comfort, and to acknowledge his goodness for every *sensitive* as well as spiritual enjoy-

ment he confers. To act otherwise, is virtually to call in question his existence, and his overruling providence.

But *riches*, to which the covetous appetite is directed, incline men to presume on their own *self-sufficiency*, and to rob God of that homage and confidence which is due to him as the Supreme Dispenser of every blessing. In many cases, they virtually depose God from his throne, and set up the world as the object of adoration and confidence. Instead of directing the soul to trust in the Most High in the midst of dangers and distress—"the rich man's *wealth* is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit," to which he looks for defence in the prospect of whatever may befal him. Hence, it is declared of Israel, after they were filled with abundance, "their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me, saith the Lord;" and hence the declaration of the Psalmist in regard to such, "they trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches." This confidence in wealth, and forgetfulness of dependence upon God, form some of the chief reasons why so many pointed injunctions are given in Scripture in reference to the evils of covetousness, and the danger attending the accumulation of wealth. It was on this account, chiefly, that the rich man "who had goods laid up for many years," was condemned. He *trusted* in these riches as the source of his happiness, and as a security in his own hands against every calamity; and he presumptuously calculated on the enjoyment of many years to come, forgetting that he was every moment dependent for existence on that Almighty Being, "in whose hand our life is, and whose are all our ways." This was likewise the characteristic sin of the rich voluptuary, "who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." He was not a miser, neither were the poor driven with insolence from his door; for Lazarus lay at his gate, and was fed with the crumbs from his table. But he was forgetful of God; his riches were his confidence; and led him to scepticism and irreligion, and to overlook and even deny the great realities of the eternal world. This is evident from his request, that Lazarus

would go, in the capacity of a prophet, and testify to his brethren the truth and reality of a future state of existence.

This confidence in riches has, in thousands of instances, been a snare to professors of religion, especially when the open profession of genuine Christianity exposed to hazard their worldly possessions. Trusting more in their wealth than in the promise of divine protection, and looking more earnestly on the things which are seen and temporal, than on those which are unseen and eternal, they have turned aside from the profession of their faith, and virtually "denied the Lord who bought them." Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, relates, that "in the time of the severe persecution of the church by the Emperor Decius, the rich men among the Christians were the most easily and miserably foiled." The love of the world vanquished their Christian fortitude, and led many of them to relapse into the profession of Pagan idolatry. In the time of the Arian persecution, many of the rich who occupied offices which should have led them "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," accommodated their profession to their desires after ambition and avarice. Like too many in our day, they had a political faith which was either orthodox or Arian, according as the State should determine, and as public favour and emolument should smile on the one or the other. The history of the church is full of examples of this kind, and there is too much reason to fear that there are many in our times, both among the clergy and the laity, following in their footsteps. It therefore becomes every one, and especially those professors of religion who are possessed of wealth, carefully to examine the state of their hearts on this point, and ascertain whether they are "trusting in the Lord," or "putting confidence in princes." In order to the exercise of confidence in God, it is necessary that we should sometimes be brought into straits and difficulties. When the poor are in want, or enjoy but a scanty portion of the good things of the world,—if they be Christians, it naturally leads them to a sense of dependence, and to look up to Him from whom

all comforts flow; and it is highly expedient for the exercise of faith and hope, that we should frequently *feel* that we are dependent creatures. But riches have a *tendency*, if we be not every moment upon our guard, to make us forget our dependence upon the Most High, and to beget a spirit of pride and self-sufficiency, as if we were able to guide ourselves through the world, without being beholden to the care of Divine Providence. But, let such learn to know, that they stand as much in need of the care and protection of heaven, as the poorest wretch that wanders houseless and forlorn. They have food and drink of every quality, and in abundance. But can food ward off calamities or death? A tile falling from a house, the oversetting of a chariot, or a flash of lightning from the clouds, will kill a rich man as well as a poor. They have changes of costly raiment, while the poor are covered with rags. But will the gout, the palsy, the stone, or the burning fever, pay any respect to costly attire? or will the patient feel less agony under them, because he is covered with purple and scarlet? Besides, an earthquake, an inundation, a tempest, a conflagration, a shipwreck, the perfidy of friends, the midnight robber, or the convulsion of nations; all which events are under the direction of God—may, in a few days, sweep from them all their earthly possessions, reduce them to a state of indigence, and lay all their earthly glory in the dust. Hence the propriety of attending to the admonition of the Psalmist: "Trust not in oppression, become not vain in robbery; *if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* Trust in Jehovah at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before him, God is a refuge for us."

8. Covetousness has produced *all the public evils, wars, and devastations which have happened in every age of the world.*

The records of history, as I have had occasion to notice, contain little else than disgusting details of the mischiefs and the miseries inflicted on the world, by the ambition and rapaciousness of mankind. The earth, which might long, ago, have been transformed into a

scene of fertility and beauty, by the benevolent agency of human beings, has, in most of its regions, been turned into a scene of desolation, by destroying armies prowling over every country in quest of plunder. Such is the insatiable appetite of *avarice*, that, not contented with "devouring widows' houses," spoiling the weak and defenceless in her native land, she has aimed at enriching herself with the plunder of Empires. Like hell and the grave, "she has enlarged her desire, and opened her mouth without measure, and the glory, the multitude and the pomp" of temples, cities, states, kingdoms, and continents, have become a prey to her ever-craving appetite, and been swallowed up and devoured. Yet, after all, she is never satisfied, and the whole earth becomes too narrow a theatre for her rapacity and ambition. Alexander, in the mad career of his conquests, subdued and plundered the greater part of the known world, and had the riches and splendour of its most magnificent cities at his command; yet when he had finished his course, he sat down and wept like a crocodile, because he had access to no other world, that might serve as a theatre for warfare and plunder. Thus it is that avarice would never curb her boundless desires, till she had glutted herself, not only with the spoils of this terrestrial region, but with the treasures of the universe; yet, like hell and destruction, she would never be satisfied. Nor would ambition—her kinsfellow and companion—ever cease its career, till it had subdued every order of intellectual existence, ascended the throne of the Most High, and seized the reins of universal government.

It would be needless to bring forward illustrations of this topic, or to attempt to show that the covetous and ambitious principle, has been the main cause of the wholesale destruction of mankind, and the wide spread of human misery, for almost the whole of the records of history contain little else than a continued series of illustrations on this point; and I have already, under the first head, selected a few examples, which might be multiplied a thousand fold.

But I cannot help pausing a little, to reflect on the nu

merous evils, and the incalculable misery which this unholy affection has produced in the world. Could we take only a bird's-eye view of its operations and effects, beginning at the first apostasy of man, and tracing them down the stream of time to the present day—and could we, at the same time, stretch our eyes over the globe, from north to south, and from east to west, and contemplate the miseries which have followed in its train in every land—what an awful and revolting picture would be presented to the view! But there is no eye, save that of Omniscience, which could take in the thousandth part of the widely-extended miseries and desolations which it has in every age produced. During the period which intervened from the fall of man to the deluge, this principle appears to have operated on an extensive scale, for we are told, that "the wickedness of man was great," and that "*the earth was filled with* VIOLENCE,"—evidently implying that the strong and powerful were continually engaged in seizing on the wealth and possessions of the weak and defenceless, oppressing the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, plundering cities, desolating fields, and carrying bloodshed and ruin through every land—till the state of society rose to such a pitch of depravity, as rendered it expedient that they should be swept at once, with an overflowing flood, from the face of creation.

After the deluge, it was not long before the lust of ambition began again to display itself by an inordinate desire after wealth and aggrandizement; and hence, wars were re-commenced among almost every tribe, which have continued, in constant succession, throughout every generation to the present day. Wherever we turn our eyes over the regions of the globe, whether to the civilized nations of Europe, the empires of Southern Asia, the frozen regions of Siberia, the sultry climes of Africa, the forests and wilds of America, or even to the most diminutive islands, which are spread over the Pacific Ocean, we behold COVETOUSNESS, like an insatiable monster, devouring human happiness, and feasting on the sorrows and sufferings of mankind. But who can calcu-

late the amount of misery which has thus been accumulated? It is more than probable, that the eighth part of the human race has been slaughtered by the wars and commotions which ambition has created; and, consequently, more than *twenty thousand millions* of mankind have become its victims; that is, twenty-five times the number of human beings which compose the present population of the globe. Along with the destruction of such a number of rational beings, we have to take into account the millions of mangled wretches whose remaining existence was rendered miserable, the numberless widows and orphans who were left to mourn the loss of every thing dear to them, the thousands of infants that have been murdered, and of females that have been violated, the famine and pestilence and the frightful desolations which destroying armies have always left behind them. Many spots of the earth, which were beautiful as Eden, have been turned into a hideous wilderness. The most splendid and magnificent cities have been set on flames or razed to their foundations, and "their memorials have perished with them." Even the lower animals have been dragged into battles, and have become sufferers amidst the fury of combatants and the wreck of nations Such are some of the hideous desolations, and the vast amount of human misery which covetousness has created; for to avarice, leagued with ambition, is to be attributed all the wars, commotions, and devastations, which have ever visited the world.

Besides such wholesale robberies and murders, covetousness is accountable for numerous *public frauds and mischiefs committed on a smaller scale* by the public agents and others connected with the governments of every country. In the management of taxes, the collection of national revenues, in contracts for the supply of armies and navies, in claims for undefined perquisites, in the bestowment of places and pensions, in soliciting and receiving bribes, in the sale and purchase of government property,—in these and numerous other instances, frauds and impositions are so frequently committed, as to have become notorious to a proverb. On such exuberant

sources of wealth, multitudes are rapidly enriched; and while nations are ground down under a load of taxation, and the industrious labourer and mechanic groaning under the pressure of poverty, a comparatively few are rolling in the chariots of splendour, fattening on the sweat and blood of millions, and feasting on the sufferings of mankind.

It is amazing with what ease and apathy, men calling themselves Christians, will talk of the prospect of war, in the view of enriching themselves with such public plunder. Scarcely any thing is more common, and yet nothing is more diabolical. To wish for war, that trade may revive and flourish, is to wish the destruction of ten thousands of our fellow-creatures, that we may add a few pounds to our hoarded treasures, or have the prospect of embarking in a profitable speculation. Yet such wishes have been indulged a thousand times, by many who *profess* to be the followers of Christ.

9. Covetousness *prevents the extension of the Christian Church, and the general improvement of Society.*

It is by means of the proper application of money, that the gospel is promulgated, sinners converted, the Bible circulated, and the tidings of salvation conveyed to heathen lands. Much still remains to be done in these respects; for more than 600,000,000 of mankind still remain enveloped in pagan darkness. If all the members of the Christian Church were to contribute according to their ability, this object, (the conversion of the world), however arduous and extensive, might ere long be accomplished. But avarice interposes, and withholds those resources which are requisite for carrying the plans of Divine Mercy into effect. If wealth were not hoarded by covetous professors of religion, or expended on their lusts, our Missionary and other Philanthropic Societies would soon have at their disposal, revenues twenty times, at least, their present amount. How many professed Christians are there, who are wallowing in wealth, and yet contributing nothing but the smallest fraction of their substance (and sometimes nothing at all), to the service

of God, and the extension of the Gospel church! And how many others are there, who, at their death, leave twenty or thirty thousand pounds to their friends, and even to distant heirs, without bequeathing a single hundred—sometimes not a single guinea, for promoting the conversion of sinners, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom! Such persons evidently belie their Christian profession, and appear to have no Scriptural idea of their obligation to "honour the Lord with their substance," and of the great end for which wealth has been bestowed.

By such conduct, they virtually prevent the conversion of thousands, the reformation of the world; and the approach of that period, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, and all flesh see his salvation." They declare, in point of fact, that the hoarding of thousands of pounds, (of which they do not stand in need,) is a matter of more importance in their eyes, than the universal propagation of religion, and the eternal happiness of thousands of immortal beings. Whatever profession they may make, whatever show of piety they may assume, they place a barrier in the way of the progress of Christianity, and too plainly indicate, that the love of the world occupies a higher place in their hearts, than the love of God.

By such conduct, *the general improvement of society is likewise prevented.*

Before society arrives to that state of perfection, of which it is susceptible, much exertion and manifold reformations are required. The universal instruction of all ranks requires to be established on a more extensive and permanent basis than it has ever yet been. Seminaries for the education of the young, and likewise for those more advanced in life, require to be multiplied at least tenfold. Colleges and academies, of different descriptions, still remain to be established in such numbers as to afford an adequate supply of *intelligent* teachers and ministers of the Gospel, for diffusing both general and scriptural knowledge among all ranks of the community.

The *physical* condition of mankind, likewise requires

to be meliorated and improved. Many of our towns and villages require to be new-modelled, and rendered clean, airy, and salubrious; and the condition of the mechanic and the labouring poor, rendered more comfortable, and more conducive to moral and mental improvement. All which objects might, at no distant period, be fully accomplished, were the superfluous wealth of the professing Christian world properly directed, and applied to its legitimate objects. But all such designs are prevented from being brought into effect, by the avarice of those who *profess* to have renounced the world and its vanities, and to be looking forward to a heavenly inheritance. There can scarcely be a more glaring contradiction, than that which such conduct and such professions imply. But as this is a topic of peculiar interest, I shall take occasion to enter into more minute detail on another branch of our subject.

10. The evil of covetousness, will further appear, if we consider *what would be the consequences were this impure affection* UNIVERSALLY *to prevail.*

Every principle and every affection in human beings, ought to be tried by the ultimate consequences to which it naturally and necessarily leads. On this ground, it might be shown, that every violation of the Divine law leads to misery, in one shape or another, both to the violater himself, and to all with whom he is connected. And farther—that, if any one commandment of the law of God were *reversed*, or set aside, or *universally* violated, not only would the most appalling consequences ensue, but it would lead to the subversion of all order among intelligent agents, and would ultimately produce the *extermination* of the race of man.

The same, of course, may be affirmed of the covetous principle. Were it to reign supreme in the human heart, and to be *universally* acted upon, it would soon lead to the utter destruction of society. It would lead, in the first instance, to universal fraud, deceit and falsehood; so that no domestic nor public business, nor commercial arrangements of any description, could be carried on

with the least degree of confidence. It would next lead to universal rapacity and plunder, which would produce a scene of turbulence and horror in which no human being could enjoy for any length of time, either happiness or repose. The strong would seize upon the possessions of the weak and defenceless, without the least remorse, and deprive them of every thing that tends to enjoyment. Every one's covetous eye would be directed to the possessions of his neighbour; and, by a thousand insidious and malignant schemes, or by open violence, every thing would be seized upon, and appropriated for the purpose of gratifying the covetous appetite. No one's life would be secure for a single week, and murders would be daily committed for the purpose of obtaining the wealth and possessions of the opulent. Of course, peace, and harmony, and kindness, would be unknown among men; every man's covetous heart be filled with malignity, and set against the interests of his neighbour. In the progress of such rapacity and plundering, wars of the most ferocious nature would take place. One nation would invade the territories of another, for the purpose of plunder; and, in the midst of the contests for spoil, cities and towns would be demolished; fruitful fields transformed into a scene of desolation, and myriads of the human race slaughtered in every land. Amidst such dreadful commotions, the fields would be permitted to lie waste and uncultivated, and human beings would be gradually diminished by slaughter, and universal famine, till, in the course of a generation or two, the whole race would be extirpated from the earth.

Such would evidently be the progress and the dreadful effects of the covetous principle, were it to operate *universally* and *unrestrained.* Such effects, indeed, it has already, to a certain degree, produced; and the annals of every nation under heaven, bear witness to the melancholy truth. And, were it not, that it is counteracted and restrained in its operations by the overruling Providence of God, by the force of natural conscience, and by the influence of Christian principles and motives, it would soon transform this globe into an immense sepulchre

overspread with desolation and dead men's bones, and fit only for a habitation to the beasts of prey. The very circumstance, that it has never yet produced such a terrible effect, is an evident proof that a moral Governor superintends the affairs of this world, and by his wise and merciful arrangements, sets "restraining bounds" to the passions of men, that his benevolent purposes in relation to our race, may be in due time accomplished.

It is evident, then, that an affection which produces such debasement of mind, and which naturally leads to such dismal and appalling consequences, must embody within it *the* ESSENCE *of almost every evil*, and of every species of moral turpitude; and, although it may appear comparatively harmless, when confined to a narrow sphere, and covered with a cloak of hypocrisy, yet it only requires to burst its confinement, to be blown into a flame, and to have free scope for its destructive energies, in order to undermine and overturn the whole fabric of the moral universe. This consideration deserves the serious attention of every one who feels the least rising of such an unhallowed passion, and should induce him to exercise holy jealousy over himself, and to use every Scriptural mean to repress and counteract its first emotions. His prayer to God should be like that of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness, and lead me in thy way everlasting."

I might likewise have enumerated among the evils produced by covetousness, the host of vices, and the anxious fears, and tumultuous passions connected with this affection—its baneful influence on friends and relatives, and on general society; that it incapacitates the individual in whose heart it reigns for enjoying substantial happiness; that it was one of the impulsive causes of the death of Christ; that, when fostered through life, it becomes *inveterate* in old age, and retains its strength and vigour, when almost every other vice has withered and decayed, and, that it has, to a certain extent, prevented the *union*

of the Christian church, and the affectionate intercourse of its members. But without dwelling on these and such particulars, I shall only observe,

In the last place,—that covetousness indulged and persisted in through life, *infallibly leads to misery in the life to come.*

"Be not deceived," says an ambassador of heaven, "neither *idolaters*, nor *thieves*, nor *covetous*, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." What a terrible and appalling denunciation, when contemplated in all its extent, and its eternal consequences! Such characters *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* And we are expressly told, that they who are banished from this kingdom, "shall be cast into the lake of fire which burneth forever and ever;" and that "they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." A covetous man is, therefore, in as direct a course to eternal misery, as the most licentious profligate, or the most atrocious characters. If men really believed in the realities of an eternal world, and in the certainty of such terrible denunciations being accomplished, how would it make their whole frame tremble at the awful prospect! But no hearts are harder than the hearts of the covetous. They are surrounded as with a wall of adamant, and fortified against every admonition, so that neither the voice from Mount Zion, nor the threatenings from Sinai, can make the least impression; and the longer they live in the world, the more impenetrable do they become, till, in the righteous judgment of God, they are sometimes given up to a hardness which nothing will penetrate but the sharpness of "unquenchable fire." This is a consideration which demands the serious attention of the young, and of those in the prime of life. It shows, with what care and holy caution, they ought to guard against the first emotions of every vicious passion, and particularly against the emotions of covetousness; for, if they be indulged, they will grow with their growth, and

strengthen with their strength, till they become *inveterate* habits, which no human power can eradicate.

I have already shown,* that the covetous must necessarily be banished from the kingdom of the just, because they are altogether unfit for relishing its pleasures, or engaging in its employments. But exclusion from the society and the joys of heaven, is not the only punishment they will suffer. They will be subjected to positive misery; and, among other sources of misery, they will be tormented with restless and insatiable desires, which will always be raging, and which will never be gratified. In the present life, while covetous desires were raging, they were *partially* gratified. But, in the future world, gold, and silver, and splendid possessions, such as are now the object of desire, will be forever beyond their reach; and, consequently, they must suffer all that is included in boundless desires and craving appetites, which are never to be gratified. Besides, all that is included in those striking representations of Scripture—"the worm that never dies; the fire that is never quenched; weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and the blackness of darkness forever," will be the portion of the ambitious and avaricious sinners, who are banished from the glories of the New Jerusalem. What will it then avail the covetous sinner, that he had heaped up gold as the dust, and silver as the stones of the field? or the ambitious sinner, that he rolled on the wheels of splendour, and fared sumptuously every day? Will riches profit in the day of wrath? Will the *recollection* of bags of gold, and chests of dollars treasured up in this fleeting world for profligate heirs, alleviate the anguish of the miser's soul in the place of punishment? Will the gay and licentious worldling find his torments assuaged by *revolving the idea*, that he was transported to hell in a splendid chariot? and that he left his degenerate offspring to be conveyed with the same pomp and equipage to the place of misery? Alas! such recollections, instead of alleviating, will only enhance the unutterable anguish of the inhabitants of Tophet, and

* See pages 90, 91.

add new fuel to the fire which is never to be quenched. Oh, that the sons of avarice and ambition, "were wise, that they understood these things," and that they would consider the eternal consequences of their present affections and conduct? Nothing can be more foolish than to prefer shadows to realities, trifles to the most momentous concerns, fleeting baubles to an enduring substance, riches that perish in the using to "a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not," the fashion of the world that passeth away, to an incorruptible inheritance, and an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." What is the hope of the hypocrite when God taketh away his soul? Yea, "what will it profit a man, though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It is therefore the dictate of true wisdom, and accordant with every rational principle, to mortify every unholy affection, to despise the vain blandishments of the world, that lieth in wickedness, to exercise contentment under the allotments of Providence, and to aspire after the enjoyment of that inheritance "which is incorruptible, and that fadeth not away."

CHAPTER V.

ON THE PRINCIPLES BY WHICH CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE DIRECTED IN THE APPLICATION OF THEIR WEALTH.

THERE are, perhaps, few things connected with the social state, of more importance than the proper distribution and application of wealth; yet there is no subject about which so many foolish and erroneous conceptions are entertained. Every man seems, in this respect, to consider himself as a kind of independent being, and to imagine that he has full power, both physical and moral, "to do with his own as he pleases." That he is invested with a sovereign right, either to give or withhold his money, as he thinks fit, and that no one has authority to say to him, "what dost thou?" Even Christians have not yet learned the legitimate use and application of riches, notwithstanding the pointed injunctions and the specific principles on this subject laid down in the word of God; and hence it has too frequently been considered as no way inconsistent with the profession of Christianity, for Christians to act, in this respect, in accordance with the maxims of general society, and the common practices of the men of the world.

It is now more than time that other and nobler views were entertained and acted upon by those who profess to be followers of the lowly Jesus—views accordant with the instructions of their Divine Master, and the admonitions of his holy prophets and apostles. In order to a slight elucidation of this subject, I shall in the first place offer a few general remarks, connected with this topic,—and, in the next place, inquire what proportion of their worldly substance, Christians ought to consecrate to the good of society, and the promotion of religion.

I. In reference to the first department of this subject, the following general principles, among many others, require to be recognized:

1. *God is the original source of all the riches we enjoy.*

"The earth belongs to Jehovah, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Every beast of the forest is his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."—"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts." All the treasures of the universe were brought into existence by His creating power, and distributed, in certain proportions, to all the ranks of sensitive and intellectual existence which people the amplitudes of creation. To man he assigned the productions of the field, the wealth of the mineral kingdom, and the treasures of the deep; and it is owing to his benevolent care and overruling Providence, that any one is permitted to procure such riches, and to enjoy those comforts of which they are the sources. Hence, it is declared by an inspired writer, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth, is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." These are truths connected with the very idea of the existence of an Eternal and Independent Being, from whom creation derived its origin; and yet they are overlooked by the greater part of mankind, as if they were a species of independent beings, and as if their own powers alone had procured them the treasures they possess. The full recognition of this fundamental truth, that "God is the original source of all riches," would introduce a most important change in the views of men with regard to wealth, and to the purposes to which it ought to be applied; and would produce a benign influence on all the movements of the Christian and the moral world.

2. *Riches are given as a trust to be employed in the service of God, and for the good of men.*

It is evident, from the very nature of the Divine Being, that wealth, when bestowed, was intended to be used in accordance with his will, and in subserviency to the accomplishments of his designs, in the moral government of the world. In conducting the affairs of the moral system, human beings are the agents he most frequently employs; and the wealth he has put into their hands has a powerful influence in accomplishing purposes either good or bad, according to the disposition of the agents. If he has intended, as his word declares, that the revelations of his will should be made known throughout the world, and that "the gospel should be preached to every creature," money is one of the grand means by which this important object is to be accomplished; and, in the present state and constitution of the world, or according to the fixed principles of the Divine Government, it is impossible that, without this mean, such a design can be brought into effect.* If he has distributed wealth in different proportions, to different individuals, and, if it is his intention to communicate happiness to his creatures, and that a certain proportion of his bounty should be enjoyed by all, then it must evidently be his will, that those who abound in riches, should "be ready to communicate," and to impart a certain portion of them to those who are in need. Hence it is commanded, "if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay, then thou shalt relieve him. Thou shalt open thy hand wide, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth." "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he repay him again." "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble." "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate." Such injunctions are laid upon the wealthy, not as a tax or a burden, but for the purpose of calling forth into ex-

* From what we know of the plan of the Divine Government, we have no reason to believe that any *miraculous* interposition will take place to effectuate the objects to which I allude. See Chapter VI

ercise the principle of benevolence; of promoting a reciprocal interchange of kindly affections and good offices between man and man; and for demonstrating the truth and efficacy of our Saviour's Divine maxim, "it is more blessed to give, than to receive."

Now, if riches, instead of being applied, in part, to such purposes as now stated, are devoted solely to base and selfish ends, to sensual gratification, to foster a passion for worldly splendour and aggrandizement, or to subserve the purposes of bribery, political rancour, or party spirit — they are consecrated to objects *directly opposite* to those which God has commanded, and determined to accomplish; and, consequently, have a tendency to frustrate, if it were possible, the plan of Divine Benevolence, and the regeneration of the world.

Since riches, then, are committed to us, as a trust from God, to be employed in his service and according to his will, every one who dares to devote them solely to such sinister purposes, must be considered as trampling on the authority of his Maker, and setting at defiance the laws of Him, whose sovereign will all the elements of nature, and all the hosts of heaven obey; and, consequently, subjects himself to the infliction of the threatenings denounced against such in the Divine word.

Our Saviour illustrates these positions in the parable of the nobleman, who delivered to his servants ten pounds, with the charge, "occupy till I come," and in the parable of the "talents," which were given to "every one according to his ability." These pounds and talents evidently denote the powers, genius, *wealth*, or authority, with which men are entrusted by their Creator, and which ought to be consecrated to the promotion of his glory and the benefit of mankind. That we are accountable for the use we make of such gifts, appears from the high rewards conferred on the faithful servants, and from the condign punishment inflicted on those who abused or misapplied the talents committed to their trust; "Cast ye the unprofitable servants into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. These mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither

and slay them before me." These are words of the most awful import; and the sufferings inflicted on them will be felt in all their appalling and eternal consequences, by those to whom they refer; and therefore, they deserve the most serious consideration of all those, who, in the spirit of pride and independence, imagine, that "they can do with their own as they please." And, if riches be a trust committed to us by God, to be employed in his service, we are as much bound to apply them to their legitimate use, as a servant to whom money is entrusted by his master, is bound to apply it to the purpose for which it was intended, and for which he must render an account. And, at that important day when the Son of man shall appear in his glory, to call his professed servants to give an account of their stewardship—the manner in which the wealth committed to our care was expended, will then undergo a solemn and impartial scrutiny in the presence of an assembled world. And happy only will they be, who shall be enabled to "give in their account with joy, and not with grief," and receive the approbation of the Great Master, "well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." In the description which our Saviour gives of the solemnities of the final judgment, the eternal destiny of the human race is represented as depending upon the manner in which they employed the wealth and influence, with which they were entrusted: "depart from me, ye cursed; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not: verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

3. Christians are bound to dedicate their substance to the Lord, *from a consideration of the love of Christ in laying down his life for their redemption.*

The apostles, in all their writings, delight to expatiate on the love of Christ, as comprising within its range a

height and a depth, a length and a breadth, "which surpasses the grasp of human comprehension, and as being the most glorious display of Divine mercy and benevolence, ever made to our world." Enraptured with this sublime idea, the apostle John exclaims, "Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because he sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This love demands the noblest sacrifices we can make for the honour of God, and for testifying our gratitude for the unspeakable favours conferred upon us through the death of his Son. Hence, the apostle Paul, in his own name and in the name of all true Christians, declares, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth *live unto themselves*, but *unto him who died for them and rose again*." In this passage, the phrase "constraineth us" imports, being carried along, or borne away as with a strong and resistless impulse, like that of a torrent which sweeps away every thing before it. The first Christians were so carried aloft as it were on the wings of love and holy desire, that all selfish aims and worldly considerations were completely overpowered and subdued. They considered their wealth and influence as wholly consecrated to the service of their Redeemer; they forsook all their earthly possessions from love to his name, and that they might promote the interests of his kingdom. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing, that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance; they accounted "all things as loss in comparison of the excellency of Christ Jesus," and reckoned the sufferings of the present life as unworthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed. Every Christian ought to be animated with such noble principles and such elevated views and affections, if he claims a right to be distinguished by that sacred

name. And, if he is inspired with such hallowed emotions, he will not "henceforth live unto himself," for the mere gratification of his own appetites and passions, or for his own ease, aggrandizement, or secular interests, as if these were the chief objects of their pursuit. But "he will live unto Him who died for him and rose again." He will consecrate his moral and mental powers, his wealth and influence, and all the talents he possesses, to the furtherance of the kingdom of Messiah, and the extension of his glory through the world; and, whatever has a bearing, however remote, on this grand object, will meet with his cordial approbation and *pecuniary* support. In promoting such objects, he will not be guided by the narrow and selfish principles of commercial policy, but by the ardour of his love to the unseen Redeemer, and by the consideration, that all he possesses was derived from the Divine bounty; and will say with David, when he distributed his treasures for rearing the temple of the Lord; "All things come of Thee, and *of thine own* have we given thee."

II. Let us now inquire more particularly what proportions of our worldly substance should be directly consecrated to the service of God.

This is a point, which, in many cases, is difficult to determine; and in some instances, it must be left to the consciences of professed Christians to decide, as in the sight of God, and as amenable to him—what portion of their riches should be directly appropriated to his service. But there are certain general principles which may be laid down, by which, every one who has expansive views of the importance of salvation, and the nobleness and generosity of the Christian character, may be directed in this matter; and by which it may be made to appear, that ten times more than has generally been allotted ought to be exclusively consecrated to the honour of God, and the regeneration of man. In addition to the three propositions noticed above, the following general maxims may be stated;—1. Wealth is of use only according to the manner in which it is employed. 2. It is by means

of riches that the poor are provided for, that the salvation of the gospel is brought into effect, and that the moral world will ultimately be enlightened and regenerated. 3. That we ought to give a portion of our substance, in some measure corresponding to the importance and the magnitude of the object to which it is devoted. 4. That a comparatively small portion of wealth is adequate to procure every thing that is requisite to the true happiness of man. 5. That all useless luxuries, and splendid equipage, intended only for mere pomp and show, should be discarded by every Christian. 6. That all, or, at least, the greater part of the wealth which remains, after providing in a decent and Christian-like manner for the comfort of our families, should be devoted to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the general improvement of the social state, in subordination to this grand object. 7. That our chief object in acquiring riches should be, that we may have it in our power to consecrate a large portion of it to the furtherance of the grand objects to which I allude. Taking the above and similar principles for granted, we may now descend to the consideration of a few particulars.

1. The proportion of wealth commanded to be dedicated to the service of God, under the Jewish economy, may be considered as involving a certain principle, by which we may be directed in similar allotments under the Christian dispensation.

It is well known, that the *tenth part* of the produce of the Land of Canaan was required from the people for the maintenance of the priests and Levites. "Behold," saith God, "I have given the children of Levi all the tenth of Israel for their inheritance, for their service which they serve."* This tithe the people paid both from the animal and vegetable produce of their estates, from the seed of the lands and the fruit of their trees, from their goats, sheep, and cattle.† Out of this tithe the Levites paid a tenth part to the priests, for their services connected with

* Numb. xviii. 21. † Levit. xxvii. 30. 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6

the tabernacle or temple.* Besides this tithe which the people were ordered to pay to the Levites, they were also to pay a tenth part of the remaining nine parts of that tithe to make a feast in the court of the sanctuary, or in some apartment belonging to it. At this feast, which was kept as an expression of their gratitude to God for the bounties of his providence, they were to entertain, along with their own families, some of the Levites.† The priests were the ministers of Jehovah, who superintended the offerings at his altar, and conducted the worship of the sanctuary. The Levites were dispersed among the toher tribes throughout every part of Canaan, and had forty-eight cities allotted them, of which thirteen belonged to the priests. Their principal office was, to instruct the people in the law of God, and to preserve and teach knowledge throughout the whole land. So that the tithe of the produce of the land was appointed not only for the support of the *priests*, but for *the instructors of youth, and of all classes of the people throughout the tribes of Israel.*

Besides this regular tithe, the Jews were obliged to abstain from all the fruits that grew on trees new planted, for the first three years, which were accounted as uncircumcised, and it was a crime for the owners to appropriate them.‡ The fruits of the *fourth* year were devoted to the Lord: they were either sent to Jerusalem, or, being valued, they were redeemed by a sum equivalent paid to the priest, so that the people did not begin to enjoy the produce of their fruit trees till the fifth year. They were likewise obliged every year to offer to God "the first of all the fruits of the earth."§ "When the head of a family," says Saurin, "walked in his garden and perceived which tree first bore fruit, he distinguished it by tying on a thread, that he might know it when the fruits were ripe. At that time, each father of a family put that fruit into a basket. At length, all the heads of families

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* Numb. xviii. 25, 28.

† Deut. xii. 18, 17; xiv. 22—27. Lev. xxviii. 31.

‡ Lev xix. 23. § Deut. xxvi. 2—18.

who had gathered such fruit in one town, were assembled, and deputies were chosen by them to carry them to Jerusalem. These offerings were put upon an ox, crowned with flowers, and the commissioners of the convoy went in pomp to Jerusalem singing these words of the 122d Psalm, 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up to the house of the Lord.' When arrived at the city they sang these words, 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' At length, they went into the temple, each carrying his offering on his shoulders, the king himself not excepted, again singing, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors.'" The Jews were also obliged to leave the corn "on the corners of the fields," for the use of the poor,* and in order to avoid the frauds which might be practised in this case, it was determined to leave the *sixtieth* part of the land as a just proportion for the poor. The ears of corn which fell from the hands in harvest, were devoted to the same purpose; and the Jews held themselves obliged by this command of God, not only to leave the poor such ears of corn as fell by chance, but to let fall some freely, and of purpose for them to glean. The produce of the earth, every seventh year, belonged to the poor, at least the owner had no more right than those who had no property.† This command is express, and the Jews have an idea of this precept, that they pretend the captivity in Babylon was a punishment for the violation of it. All debts contracted among the Jews were released at the end of every seven years; so that a debtor that could not discharge his debts within seven years, was, at the end of that time, released from all obligation to discharge it.‡ To all these offerings and expenses are to be added extraordinary expenses for sacrifices, oblations, journeys to Jerusalem at the solemn feasts, the half-shekels to the sanctuary, and various other items connected with the political state and ceremonial worship of the Jews, so that more than one-fourth, and

* Lev. xix. 9. † Lev. xxv. ‡ Deut. xv. 2.

perhaps nearly *one-half* of their incomes was, in such ways, devoted to public and religious purposes.

Now, if the tenth part, at least, of the income of every Israelite was to be devoted to such purposes, it would seem to follow, that *nothing less* than this proportion should be allotted by every Christian under the gospel dispensation, for similar or analogous purposes. But it does not limit us to this proportion; as there are obvious reasons why it should be much greater under the New-Testament economy. If the propagation of divine knowledge within the narrow limits of Judea required such a proportion of the income of every individual, while no missions were appointed to surrounding nations; much more, it is evident, is required under the present dispensation, when we are commanded to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and when more than six hundred millions of the earth's population, are still immersed in Pagan and Mahometan darkness, ignorant of "the true God and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." The exertion now required ought to be in some measure proportionate to the magnitude and extent of the work to be accomplished, and would require an expansion of heart, and the manifestation of a spirit similar to that which was displayed on the day of Pentecost, when "all that believed were together and had all things common, and *sold their possessions and goods*," and devoted them to the cause of their Redeemer. If Christians be really in earnest, as they ought to be, why should they hesitate a moment on this subject? If they see misery every where around them, and multitudes perishing in their sins, if they behold hundreds of millions of the heathen world, overspread with moral and intellectual darkness, and perishing for lack of knowledge, if even the rude inhabitants of the Navigator's isles, are sending their urgent petitions from afar, saying, "Send over missionaries and help us;" if they are saying, almost in an agony, as they lately did to Mr. Williams, when he promised to come to Britain for a supply,—"We shall perhaps die, we shall die, we shall die, before you can return;" if Christians believe that "the redemption of the

soul is precious," and that the eternal happiness of immortal minds so far surpasses in value, the floating honours of the world, as the heavens in height surpass the earth; why should they remain in apathy or halt between two opinions on this point? Let wealthy Christians come forward with a noble spirit, and either consecrate a liberal portion of their riches, with cheerfulness, for such objects, or take the only consistent alternative—*throw aside altogether the Christian name;* for a covetous Christian is a nuisance in the church of God, and a *contradiction in terms.*

Let us now consider the sums that might be raised, supposing only one-tenth of income to be set apart for the purposes of philanthropy and religion. Supposing the population of Great Britain to amount to 16,000,000, and reckoning only 2,000,000 heads of families, or the eighth part of the population to be connected with a Christian church; and supposing farther, that only one fiftieth of these, or 40,000, have incomes averaging £500; the tenth of these incomes would produce a sum of £2,000,000. Supposing the tenth part of the remaining population, 196,000, to have incomes of £200 a year, the annual tithe would be £3,920,000. Suppose the remaining 1,764,000, to have, at an average, £80 per annum, its tithe would amount to £14,112,000, so that the whole of this supposed annual tithe of income would amount to above *twenty millions* of pounds, which is more than forty times the amount of the annual funds of the Bible, Missionary, and other philanthropic societies in Great Britain, which do not amount to *half* a million. In this calculation, I have not taken into account a million or two of grown-up individuals, belonging to the different families in the kingdom, who have separate establishments from their parents, and who might be supposed to contribute several millions of pounds. Nor have I taken into the calculation several thousands of the nobility and gentry, who occupy the highest places of society—some of whom could afford from one to ten thousand pounds annually, and which would add a considerable number of millions to the sum above stated. If such sums could be

raised, without subtracting any substantial comfort from a single individual, how small is the number of Christians worthy of the name, to be found in our country? since the fiftieth, or even the hundredth part of this sum can scarcely be raised among all the ranks and denominations of Religious society. But much more than even the above stated proportion ought, in numerous instances, to be devoted to religion and philanthropy. If, for example, a person has an income of £900 a year, I have no hesitation in saying, that, if he wish to act as a steward under God, for the distribution of his bounty, he ought to consecrate, at least, £400 annually to the promotion of Christianity and general improvement. And, will any one aver, that the remaining £500 is not sufficient to procure every comfort that a rational or Christian character ought to desire. But the whole £900, it may be said, is requisite for the individual to keep up the dignity of his station. If keeping up the pomp and dignity of a station, is to be set in competition with the demands of religion, then let the individual take the world on his back and march off as far as he can from Christian society; for such persons have too frequently been a pest to religious associations. Verily I say unto him, he shall have his reward; but a reward after which, I trust in God, I shall never aspire. Let such remember the Divine admonition, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." There is an absolute incompatibility between the service of the one and of the other; and he who is not prepared to give up worldly maxims, pomp, and splendour, and to devote his influence and his superfluous wealth, to the cause of religion, ought not to assume the Christian name.

2. The *voluntary contributions* made at different times *under the Jewish economy* may be considered as a guide to direct us in the liberality which should be displayed among Christians.

When the tabernacle was about to be reared in the wilderness, there was a noble display of liberality on the part of the people. "They came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets,

and ear-rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold to the Lord. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass, brought the Lord's offering; and all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. The rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breast-plate, and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense," &c.* Such was the holy ardour of both sexes, and of all ranks of the people, in bringing forward these voluntary offerings, that it was judged expedient to issue a proclamation to restrain their liberality. "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and it was caused to be proclaimed without the camp, saying,—Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary."† On this occasion, the amount of the offerings of gold and silver alone, was twenty-nine talents, and 730 shekels of gold, and 100 talents, and 1775 shekels of silver,‡ which, reckoning according to the *present* value of British money, would nearly equal the sum of four hundred thousand pounds.§ To this sum must be added the value of the vast quantity of brass which was used in the construction of the court and furniture of the tabernacle—the rich embroidered curtains which covered it, and which surrounded the court; the jewels that were set in the High Priest's ephod and breast-plate, and various other materials and utensils which are stated in the description of this sacred edifice—all of which must have amounted to an immense sum. Yet all this treasure was

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*Exod. xxxv. 22—29. †xxxvi. 5, 6. ‡xxxviii. 24, 25.

§ Bishop Cumberland calculated the amount in English coin, to be £182,568. But as this calculation was made about a century ago, this sum requires to be more than doubled to express the *present* value of British money.

brought forward with the greatest alacrity, by a nation that numbered little more than half a million of males, from twenty years old and upwards, and whose whole population must have been inferior to that of Scotland.

At the *dedication* of the tabernacle, some time afterwards, the offerings of the twelve princes, or heads of the tribes of Israel, were likewise munificent, amounting in silver vessels to 2400 shekels of the sanctuary, and in gold vessels to 120 shekels, which, (reckoning the silver shekel at five shillings, and the gold shekel at £30,* according to the *present value* of British money) would make £4200, or £350, for each of the princes. Besides these, there were likewise offered thirty-six bullocks, and 216 sheep, goats and lambs, which would amount to about £800 more. At the dedication of the *Temple*, Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep,† which, in value, was equal to more than £460,000, a sum which is greater than the amount of the whole funds of the "British and Foreign Bible Society," during the first nine or ten years of its existence. When Hezekiah commenced a work of reformation among the people of Judah, similar costly sacrifices were voluntarily brought forward by the people. "The number of burnt offerings which the congregation brought, was 70 bullocks, 100 rams, 200 lambs; and the consecrated things, 600 oxen, and 3000 sheep; which would equal in value about £13,000. These, and other consecrated things, the people offered with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity: "For as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought, in abundance, the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and all the increase of the field, and the tithe of holy things, which were consecrated to the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps,"‡

*About the beginning of last century the Jewish *silver* shekel was valued at 2s. 6d. and the *gold* shekel at £15, corresponding to the value of money at that period; but as British money has increased in value since that time more than one-half, the silver shekel ought not to be valued at less than 5s. nor the gold one at less than £30 of British money at its present standard.—See Num. vii. 85—88.

†2 Chron. vii. 5. ‡2 Chron. xxix. 32; xxxi. 5—7.

so that Hezekiah and his princes when they saw the heaps which had been collected from every part of the land, for four months, were filled with gratitude, and "blessed Jehovah, and his people Israel." All these offerings flowed from the voluntary contributions of the people; and, although the Almighty does not need "to eat the flesh of bulls, or to drink the blood of goats," yet we are commanded to offer unto God thanksgiving, and to pay our vows to the Most High. These offerings, in connexion with their typical references, were intended as a manifestation of the gratitude of the people to God for all his goodness, and an evidence of their desire to co-operate with him in promoting his merciful and gracious designs; and, with similar views ought all the contributions and offerings of Christians to be brought forward.

When Josiah, the great-grandson of Hezekiah, made preparations for a solemn passover to the Lord, "he gave to the people for the passover offerings, 30,000 lambs and kids, and 3000 bullocks." "And his princes gave *willingly* to the people, the priests and the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests, for the passover offering, 2600 small cattle and 300 oxen. Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah, and Jehiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for passover offerings, 5000 small cattle, and 500 oxen." The expense of all these offerings, according to the value of such property in the present day, would amount to about *one hundred thousand pounds*, of which 60,000 was given by the king. The offerings of the three rulers of the temple amounted to £13,400, or £4350 to each; and those of the six chiefs of the Levites to £25,000, which is about £4166 to each individual, which must certainly be considered as munificent donations, when we consider, that they were contributed only for *one* particular solemnity.* And let it also be remembered, that they were all *volun-*

* In the estimate of the value of the offerings here given, £10 is allowed for the price of a bullock, £4 for each of the small cattle, £2 for a sheep, and £1 for each of the lambs and kids. See 2 Chron. xxx. 7–10.

tary offerings, independent of the regular tithe and other contributions required from Jewish worshippers. Where have we such munificent donations from those members of the Christian Church who have incomes of several thousands a year! If two or three philanthropic individuals, in the course of a generation, bestow such contributions for the interests of religion, it is considered as a kind of phenomenon in the Christian world. When the Israelites returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in the days of Ezra, we are informed by that sacred historian, that, when "he weighed the silver and the gold, and the vessels, the offering of the house of the Lord, which the king and his lords and all Israel there present had offered," it amounted to "650 talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents; also twenty basins of gold, of a thousand drams, and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold." The whole value of this dedicated treasure, calculated at the rate formerly stated, would amount to £761,250.*

But, the most munificent donation of this kind any where recorded, is that of David, for the purpose of rearing a temple for the worship of Jehovah. In chapter xxii. of the first book of Chronicles, verse 14, we are informed, that David "in his trouble prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver: and of brass and iron without weight," and in chapter xxix. 3—9, it is stated, that beside this sum there were given "three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver to overlay the walls of the houses." His princes, captains, and the chief of the fathers likewise "offered willingly" to the amount in *gold* of "five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron." The whole of these offerings, besides the brass and iron, amounted to 108,000 talents of gold, and 1,017,000 talents of silver. Now, as the talent of gold has been estimated

* Ezra viii. 25–27.

by some at £5425, and the talent of silver at £342—the whole of this treasure would not be much less than a *thousand millions of pounds sterling*. And we are told, that, in so far from being given with a grudge, "the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly; because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy, and blessed the Lord before all the congregation," ascribing the whole of this treasure, and the liberal dispositions of the donors to Him who is the creator of heaven and earth, and the original source of every blessing. "All things come of thee, and *of thine own* have we given thee. All of this store we have prepared to build thee an house, for thy holy name cometh of thine hand, and *is all thine own*."

Several other examples might have been produced to illustrate the liberality which was displayed under the Old Testament economy, especially when the people were stirred up to engage in a work of reformation; but the above may suffice to show that much more liberal offerings were voluntarily brought forward in the Jewish church than have generally been contributed under the Christian dispensation. And will any one presume to deny, that the liberality displayed by pious worshippers among the Jews, ought to be imitated by the faithful under the New Testament economy? The examples of the pious Israelites, in this respect, were undoubtedly intended as a pattern to the Christian church, and the offerings then made may be considered as typical or emblematical of the more splendid offerings which would be exhibited by New Testament saints, when "God shall appear in his glory to men, and build up the walls of his Jerusalem," and cause "Zion to appear beautiful and glorious in the eyes of the nations." Let it not, however, be imagined, that we are *merely to imitate* the Old Testament saints, and to rise no higher in our contributions than what was requisite under that economy. For Christians are called to a *much more arduous and extensive work* than the nation of Israel. THE FIELD of Divine labour in which Christians are called to be employed, "IS THE WORLD;" and the tenth part of this field has not yet been subdued or

cultivated. And the call addressed to the church by Him who hath all power and authority in heaven and on earth, is, "Preach the gospel to every creature." In proportion, then, to the superior grandeur and magnificence of the enterprise should be the munificence of the contributions by which it is to be accomplished. In this enterprise, Christian *females* as well as males ought to be actively engaged; and a noble example is set them by the female Israelites who took an active part in preparing materials for the tabernacle in the wilderness. "All the women that were wise-hearted, did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun of blue and of purple and of scarlet and of fine linen. They came both men and *women* as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets and ear-rings and tablets, all jewels of gold, and offered them to the Lord." In this work of faith and labour of love, every human being, male and female, young and old, ought to take a part, till the fabric of the Christian church be completely reared, and established in every region of the globe.

3. The *proportion of wealth* which Christians should appropriate for the service of God, and the renovation of the world, *may be deduced from the predictions of the ancient prophets.*

In those prophecies which have a respect to the future glory of Messiah's reign, there are frequent references to the treasures which will be brought forward to promote the prosperity of his kingdom. In the seventy-second Psalm, which contains predictions respecting the prosperity and universal extension of the kingdom of the Redeemer, we are told, that "the kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts," and that "the gold of Sheba" shall be brought as an offering to his service—evidently implying that the converts from among the Gentiles would consecrate a portion of their wealth for the promotion of his kingdom, and that the treasures, thus devoted, would be large and munificent in proportion to the rank and riches

of the donors. In the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, this subject is introduced, and exhibited in every variety of aspect. That portion of prophecy has for its object to delineate the prosperity of the gospel church in the latter days, its universal extension, the joy of its members, and the rich and diversified gifts which would be voluntarily brought forth and devoted to its interests. "The abundance of the sea," or the wealth conveyed in ships, "shal be converted unto thee, the forces," or, as it should be rendered, "the *wealth* of the Gentiles shall come unto thee; the multitudes of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and shall show forth the praises of the Lord." Camels and dromedaries constitute the principal riches of a portion of Arabia, where the descendants of Midian and Ephah resided; and the country of Sheba was distinguished for its gold. Hence we are told by the prophet Ezekiel, "the merchants of Sheba traded at the fairs of Tyre in spices, in gold, and in all precious stones."* "The flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee; the rams of Nebiaoth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance upon mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory." As the chief wealth of the Arabians consisted in their camels and dromedaries, so the wealth of the inhabitants of Kedar consisted chiefly in their flocks in which they traded with the merchants of Tyre as stated by the prophet, "The Arabians and all the princes of Kedar traded with thee in rams and lambs and goats."†

These descriptions plainly intimate, that in whatever commodities the riches of any people consist, the converts of Zion will bring a large portion of these treasures, as an expression of their gratitude, to promote the honour of God, and the extension of his kingdom; and that they will consider it as a matter of course, when they make a profession of their faith in the Redeemer and enter the gospel church, that they will bring along with them their worldly substance to be devoted to his service. This is

* Ezek. xxvii. 22. † Ibid. ver. 21

likewise stated in the following passage: "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, *their silver and their gold with them* unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the holy one of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." The grand motive which will animate the hearts of these converts is here expressed—"*Because he hath glorified thee.*" Their hearts will be so inflamed and expanded with a sense of the grace and condescension of the Redeemer, with the importance of the great salvation, and with the high dignity to which they are exalted as "the sons of God," that they will consider the consecration of their earthly treasures as nothing more than a small expression of their gratitude "to him who loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and who hath made them kings and priests to God and his Father." It is farther stated as a display of the munificence of Zion's converts at that period, and of the eternal and spiritual grandeur of the church:—"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious." This description may denote, that the temples reared for the worship of Jehovah, and every thing connected with his service, will be beautified with every chaste ornament befitting the sanctity of his ordinances, and the enlightened views and improved condition of the citizens of Zion. And it may likewise intimate, that persons endowed with splendid accomplishments, extensive knowledge, persuasive eloquence, and with heavenly dispositions, will be raised up to adorn the church of God, and to display the beauties of holiness, as the timber of the different kinds of trees here mentioned, adorned the sanctuary and the most holy place in the temple of Solomon. In both these respects, the riches of Zion's citizens will be required, and it will be abundantly supplied.

The above stated predictions, and several others which might have been quoted, evidently show, that, in New Testament times, when God is about "to appear in his glory to men," and "to repair the desolations of Zion,"

immense treasures of all descriptions will be voluntarily contributed by her converts to promote her prosperity and to accomplish the purposes of Divine benevolence. All that has hitherto been given for the support of the true church of Christ, will bear no proportion to the vast treasures which will then be appropriated for promoting her extension and glory; for they will then be increased at least a hundred fold. Hence it is declared in a subsequent passage of this prophecy: "For *brass* I will bring *gold*, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron." It is added, "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness." The superintendents or overseers of the church will be "men fearing God and *hating covetousness*," and "not given to filthy lucre," so that the wealth consecrated to its use will be properly distributed, and faithfully applied to the ends for which it is appropriated. In this respect, they will form a striking contrast to many office-bearers that have appeared in the church at different periods, who are characterized by the prophet, as "greedy dogs that can never have enough, and shepherds that cannot understand, who look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter." And whether this character may not apply to many in our day, demands the serious consideration of some of those who have been invested with the sacred office.*

Now, if it is clearly predicted, that in the latter ages of the church a vast proportion of wealth will be devoted

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* Dr. Mosheim states, with regard to the conduct of the bishops and presbyters of the third century, that "though several yet continued to exhibit to the world illustrious examples of primitive piety and Christian virtue, yet many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord, and addicted to many other vices, that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were the unworthy professors and ministers." The same author, in his history of the sixteenth century, states, "that the greatest part of the bishops and canons passed their days in dissolute mirth and luxury, and squandered away in the gratification of their lusts and passions, that wealth which had been set apart for charitable and religious purposes."

to the interests of religion, it becomes us seriously to consider whether we ought not, at this moment, to realize the accomplishment of such predictions, by coming forward, with enlarged hearts and munificent offerings, to accomplish the gracious designs of the Most High. What a high honour would it be, far surpassing every earthly distinction, to be considered as the special objects to which ancient prophecy refers, and that the Omniscient Jehovah should have us in his eye when he communicated his will, in the days of old, to the inspired prophets! What a dignified privilege is it that the great God who has all the treasures of the universe at his command, should condescend to make us "workers together with him" in accomplishing his merciful and beneficent designs, and to accept of the wealth we possess, as the means by which his eternal purposes are to be brought into effect! Can any other application of our riches procure us higher honour or felicity, either in time or through eternity? And it is only our *superfluous* wealth which he demands, while he leaves us every thing requisite to all the sensitive enjoyments which a rational and immortal soul ought to desire. If we had right views of the true use of riches, and of the noble ends that may, and *ought to be* accomplished by them, we should esteem it our highest privilege and delight to consecrate all we possess to the glory of God, and the promotion of the best interests of mankind. We should feel a pleasure, not to be compared with selfish gratification, in beholding the Divine plans gradually accomplishing, in witnessing the diminution of moral evil, and wretchedness, the expansion of the human mind by the propagation of Divine knowledge, and happiness diffusing itself among all ranks, and in every region of the globe. Let Christians, then, seriously consider these things, and arouse themselves from that apathy and indifference into which they have been so long sunk, with respect to the legitimate application of their worldly treasures. Let them consider whether the transitory pomp of this world, and "the honour which cometh from men," ought to be set in competition with the prosperity of Zion, and "the honour which cometh from God alone." Let

them consider whether "the lust of the eye and the pride of life," costly furniture and splendid equipages, ought to be preferred to "beautifying Jehovah's sanctuary, and making the place of his feet glorious;" in short, whether selfish gratifications, and "things seen and temporal," ought to be exalted above an incorruptible inheritance, and those things which are unseen and eternal."

Let us consider, for a moment, the gross amount of what might be, and what ought to be raised, in Great Britain alone, for the purposes of religion and philanthropy. I have already stated, on the ground of a very low estimate, (p. 173.) that more than twenty millions of pounds might be raised by devoting *one-tenth* of income to such objects. But as there are multitudes of individuals who ought to devote the one-half of their incomes, when large, to the service of God—on the principles now recognised and adverted to in the language of ancient prophecy—we ought not to expect less than a *hundred millions* of pounds annually, were wealthy Christians to consider themselves as stewards for God, and to act in a manner worthy of the Christian name. It is a disgrace to that sacred name that so little has hitherto been raised for the great objects to which money should chiefly be devoted. Shall *fifty millions* of pounds be annually wasted, within the limits of the British isles, in the purchase of intoxicating liquors? Shall hundreds of millions be raised for carrying forward the purposes of ambition and warfare? and shall only a *few droppings* of overflowing wealth, the mere *lees* or *scum* of abundant riches, be devoted to the noblest and most important objects that can engage the attention of man? Forbid it heaven! That such has hitherto been the case, that such is the case at the present moment, is perhaps one of the most glaring inconsistencies, and one of the foulest blots that disfigures the Christian character and the Christian church.

It is now time that such inconsistencies and such stains were wiped away from the face of the religious world, and that the followers of Jesus begin to act in consistency with their high character and their heavenly calling. If we refuse to come forward with our treasures at the call

of God, he may be provoked to realize, in our experience, that denunciation recorded in the chapter to which we have adverted. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, (namely, the church,) *shall perish*, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." This denunciation immediately follows upon this declaration, "Thy gates shall be open continually, that men may bring unto thee *the wealth of the Gentiles*, and that their kings may be brought." If we hesitate long in coming to a decision on this point, God may soon confer the honour of accomplishing his designs upon other tribes and nations whom we now despise. Many of the Christians in the Northern States of America, are now beginning to exert themselves with a noble generosity in the cause of Christian improvement. Even the inhabitants of the Society Isles—so lately immersed in all the ignorance, superstition, and vices peculiar to the savage state, are contributing of their oil and other productions of their country, instead of money, for carrying forward missionary enterprises among other unenlightened tribes; and they are perhaps at this moment contributing more in this way, in proportion to their numbers and their wealth, than the inhabitants of Britain. The natives of the Navigator's islands, lately deemed so ferocious that mariners were afraid to land upon their coasts, are now lifting up their voices from afar, and imploring missionaries to instruct them in the knowledge of salvation, and offering whatever they can afford of their substance for this purpose. And, ere long, these and other inhabitants of the Isles of the Pacific, may bring their valuable treasures "to beautify the sanctuary of God," and to promote the extension of his kingdom. For, such persons, and such localities come within the range of prophetical description: "Surely the isles shall wait for me—the *isles afar off* that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the ends of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, the isles, and the inhabitants thereof; let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them give glory to the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands." Let

British Christians, then, rouse themselves from their lethargy, and shake themselves loose from every covetous affection; let them come forth with cheerfulness and alacrity, with their treasures in their hands, to be consecrated to the glory of God and the renovation of the world; let them trample under foot, with a noble heroism, every selfish maxim, and the fashion of this world that passeth away, and account it their highest felicity and honour to be instrumental in furthering the plans of Divine mercy and beneficence; and great shall be their reward. For they who are the instruments of turning many to righteousness, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever."

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE BENEFITS WHICH WOULD FLOW TO THE WORLD, WERE COVETOUSNESS UNDERMINED, AND AN OPPOSITE PRINCIPLE PREVAILING IN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

WERE the covetous principle completely undermined, and, consequently, were wealth applied to its legitimate objects, according to the intention of the Creator,—every thing requisite to promote the physical comfort, and the moral and intellectual enjoyment of man in this world, and his preparation for a future state of happiness, might, at no distant period, be speedily effected. Even the physical aspect of the globe might be renovated, and its barren deserts transformed into a scene of fertility and beauty, so that "the wilderness and the solitary place" might be made "to rejoice and blossom as the rose." Although the inordinate love of money is "*the root of all evil*," yet the proper distribution of it, on the foundation of Christian principles, may be pronounced to be *the source of all good.*

We have already shown, that the almost universal prevalence of covetousness, has been the cause of most of the wars and devastations which have convulsed the world, and the source of most of the evils and sufferings under which the human race have groaned in every age. And it might likewise be demonstrated, that the proper application of wealth would go far to undermine, and ultimately to destroy all such evils, and to diffuse among all ranks, a degree of happiness and comfort which has never yet been enjoyed in any period, since man first violated the law of his Creator. It is scarcely conceivable, at first view, what innumerable benefits, of every description, might be conferred on our fellow-men, and on the world at large, by an application, on liberal and

Christian principles, of the riches which we at this moment possess. And, we may rest assured, that while we refuse to apply our treasures to the objects to which I allude, we do every thing in our power to frustrate the designs of our Creator in bestowing upon us such treasures, and to counteract the benevolent operations of his moral government.

A work of immense magnitude, however, requires to be accomplished, and vast exertions are indispensably requisite, before physical and moral evil can be undermined, and the way prepared for the universal improvement of mankind, and the spiritual regeneration of the world. But man has moral and intellectual powers and treasures of wealth, fully adequate to the enterprise, arduous and expensive as it is; and, under the agency of the Divine Spirit, who is promised to work in us both "to will and to perform the good pleasure of God," he is able to accomplish every thing to which we allude, provided he is WILLING to consecrate his energies and his treasures to this work of faith and labour of love.

But, let us now attend more particularly to some departments of the *work* to be accomplished, and to the *means* to bring it into effect.

1. Were covetousness undermined, and an opposite principle acted upon, *abundant provision would be made for the external comfort of the poor and destitute.*

The God of nature has displayed his exuberant goodness towards our world in every age, in "giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons," and in supplying the inhabitants of every clime with what is requisite for their subsistence and comfort; though the earth has yielded the harvests of six thousand years, it has never yet lost its fertility, but pours forth its fruits, every autumn, in rich abundance; and could afford sustenance for hundreds of millions more than have ever, at any one time, traversed its surface, since the days of Noah. Yet we find thousands and ten thousands pining in poverty and want; not only in bleak and barren deserts, but in the

most fertile countries, and in the midst of plenty and splendour; and, in some instances, absolutely perishing for lack of the *necessaries* of life, while pride and opulence are rioting within their view in luxurious abundance.

At this very moment in Ireland, and especially in the county of Limerick, the poor are literally dying of want, by hundreds. "The present state* of the poor in Ireland," says a member of Parliament, "is terrible not only to behold, but even to contemplate. In this neglected country, the poor are thrown on the industrious classes for relief in their wretchedness, as the rich not only guard their mansions by high walls and surly porters, but actually drive the poor creatures away with dogs. In America, clearing the estates, means cutting down the timber, but here it means, cutting down human life. The poor, when driven from their homes, have no asylum to fly to, but to leave their country, or lie down and die."

Mr. Ingles, in his "Journey throughout Ireland, in 1834," gives the following description of the wretchedness he witnessed, in the same district, to which we now allude.

"Some of the abodes I visited, were garrets, some were cellars, some were hovels on the ground floor, situated in narrow yards or alleys. I will not speak of the filth of these places; that could not be exceeded in places meant to be its receptacles. Let the worst be imagined, and it will not be beyond the truth. In at least three-fourths of the hovels which I entered, there was no furniture of any description, save an iron pot, no table, no chair, no bench, no bedstead—two, three, or four little bundles of straw, with, perhaps, one or two scanty or ragged mats, were rolled up in the corners, unless when these beds were found occupied. The inmates were, some of them, old, crooked, and diseased, some younger, but emaciated, and surrounded by starving children, some

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*November, 1835.

were sitting on the damp ground, some standing, and some were unable to rise from their little straw heaps. In scarcely one hovel, could I find even a potatoe. In one which I entered, I noticed a small opening leading into an inner room. I lighted a piece of paper at the embers of a turf which lay in the chimney, and looked in. It was a cellar, wholly dark, and about twelve feet square: two bundles of straw lay in two corners; on one sat a bed-ridden woman; on another lay two naked children—literally naked, with a torn rag of some kind thrown over them both. But I saw worse than even this. In a cellar which I entered, and which was almost quite dark, and slippery with damp, I found a man sitting on a little saw-dust. He was naked; he had not even a shirt; a filthy and ragged mat was around him. This man was a living skeleton; the bones all but protruded through the skin; he was literally starving.

"In place of visiting forty hovels of this description, I might have visited hundreds. In place of seeing, as I did, hundreds of men, women, and children, in the last stage of destitution, I might have seen thousands. I entered the alleys and visited the hovels, and climbed the stairs at a venture; and I have no reason to believe that the forty which I visited, were the abodes of greater wretchedness than the hundreds which I passed by. I saw also another kind of destitution. The individuals I have yet spoken of were aged, infirm, or diseased; but there was another class fast approaching infirmity and disease, but yet able and willing to earn their subsistence. I found many hand-loom weavers, who worked from five in the morning till eight at night, and received from a task-master, from half a crown to four shillings a week. Many of these men had wives and families; and I need scarcely say, that confinement, labour, scanty subsistence, and despair, were fast reducing these men to the condition of the others, upon whom disease and utter destitution had already laid their hands. The subsistence of these men consisted of one scanty meal of dry potatoes daily." "To keep the bodies and souls of these miserable creatures to-

gether, many a humane citizen contributes more than the noble owner of all the property."

Yet all this happens in a *Christian land!* where thousands are wallowing amidst overflowing wealth!

In the city of Naples, there are above 30,000 persons, distinguished by the appellation *Lazzaroni*, the greater part of whom have no other home than the earth for a floor, and the sky for a ceiling, who sleep every night under porticos, piazzas, or any other kind of shelter they can find. Although they are the object of detestation to travellers, yet they are in fact merely the poorer class of labourers, who, attached to no particular trade, are yet willing to work, and to take any job that is offered. If they are idle, it is not their own fault: since they are continually running about the streets begging for employment. If they are ignorant and debased, and frequently addicted to pilfering, it is more their misfortune than their crime; for no provision has been made for their instruction, nor arrangements for supplying them with the work they are willing to perform; although they are surrounded with 12,000 ecclesiastics living in opulence and splendour, and with numerous nobility rioting in extravagance upon princely fortunes. Those of them who have wives and families live in the suburbs of Naples, near Pensilippo, in huts, or *in caverns or chambers dug out of that mountain.*

These people, however, wretched as they are, have had a certain degree of moral influence. In opposition to the measures of the court, they prevented the establishment of the inquisition; and such was their disinterested patriotism, that they generously offered their services to save their sinking country from the French invasion, while the nobles had meanly abandoned the breach and forsaken their sovereign; and, it was merely owing to the want of leaders, that they reluctantly submitted to inaction. To what causes, then, but to criminal apathy and *avarice*, are to be imputed the destitute and miserable state of these Lazzaroni,—since the surrounding country is fertile and delightful; since wealth is

flowing in streams around them, and the glitter of pomp and equipage is continually before their eyes.*

Even in the British metropolis, and other cities of the empire, scenes not altogether dissimilar to the above, are frequently to be found. According to the statements of Dr. Colquhoun, there are in London, upwards of 20,000 persons who rise every morning without employment, and rely for maintenance on the accidents of the day.

Were we to inspect all the narrow lanes, the cellars, garrets, and hovels, connected with Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Newcastle, Dublin, Cork, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and other British towns and cities, we should find the most appalling scenes of destitution and wretchedness, of which three fourths of our population, and especially the higher ranks, can form no conception. Indeed, wherever we turn our eyes, whether in the country, the village, or the crowded city, we never fail to behold multitudes of the blind, the lame, the diseased, and even the healthy, in a state of penury and destitution—many of them only half-covered with rags, and exposed, houseless and forlorn, to the nipping frosts, and to all the inclemencies of the season. Many of these wretched creatures are immoral and depraved; but the cause of this is not so much to be attributed to the individuals themselves, as to the arrangements of general society. Society has never yet provided for such, the means of education, of moral training, of employment, or what is necessary for their comfortable subsistence; and general society is, therefore, accountable in part, both for the misery they suffer, and the crimes they occasionally commit.

An American writer, who very lately visited Italy, and other countries in Europe, makes the following statements in reference to the city of Naples. "I have been struck repeatedly with the little value attached to human life in Italy. I have seen several of these houseless Laz-

* It is a proverbial saying among the other Italians, that "Naples is a paradise inhabited by devils."

zaroni literally dying in the streets, and no one curious enough to look at them. The most dreadful sufferings, the most despairing cries, in the open squares, are passed as unnoticed as the howling of a dog. The day before yesterday, a woman fell, in the Toledo, in a fit, frothing at the mouth, and livid with pain; and though the street was so crowded that one could make his way with difficulty, three or four ragged children were the only persons seen looking at her."*

It is easy, therefore, to perceive, that were covetousness undermined, and a godlike generosity substituted in its place—no such miserable and revolting scenes would disgrace our world. We should no longer behold the houseless and benighted wanderer hung with rags, shivering amidst the blasts of winter, and reposing under a hedge, or in the streets under the open canopy of heaven, nor the blind and the dumb, the halt and the maimed, wandering along our streets and highways friendless and forlorn, and destitute of the comforts which every human being ought to enjoy. But, on the other hand, those whom God has blessed with abundance, would, like Job, be "eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the poor. The blessing of them who are ready to perish would come upon them, and they would cause the widow's heart to sing with joy."

It is not, however, by bestowing money directly on the poor, except in certain urgent cases,—nor even by endowing alms-houses, or asylums, except for the blind,†

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* "Pencillings by the way." By N. P. Willis, Esq. 1835.

† Even the blind may, in many cases, be usefully employed. We have had several celebrated lecturers and teachers of science, who had been either blind from their birth, or had lost their sight at a very early period, such as Professor Saunderson, Dr. Moyes, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Gough, and others, who were the means of communicating popular instruction in science, to many thousands in different countries. Such persons, among the lower ranks, have been usefully employed in basket-making, weaving, and other occupations; and in such exercises, have felt enjoyments which they could not otherwise have experienced.

the aged, and the infirm, who are unable to work; but by affording employment, and a proper remuneration for labour, to all who enjoy health and vigour of body and mind. For every human being ought to be actively employed in something which contributes to his own benefit, and the good of others. An absolutely idle person, is both a burden to himself, and a nuisance in society; and he never can feel the sweets of true enjoyment. It is contrary to the evident design of the Creator, in bestowing upon us both physical and moral powers, that any class of these powers should remain dormant or unemployed. And, therefore, the plan of cooping up hundreds of healthy persons in hospitals and poor-houses, without being employed in regular mental and bodily exercises, is evidently contrary to nature, and consequently subversive of true happiness.

The true method of promoting the comfort of the poor, is to furnish them with the means of instruction and employment, to provide them with comfortable habitations, and to teach them the rules of economy, temperance, and moral order, and to see that their children be properly educated in the different branches of useful knowledge, and in the doctrines and duties of religion. There are many ways by which such objects might be accomplished, either by opulent individuals, or by society at large. In the building of churches, schools, lecture-rooms, and work-shops, throughout the country, wherever they are required; in the cultivation of waste grounds, the draining of land, the formation of roads, and comfortable foot-paths throughout every part of the country; in forming public walks around villages and towns; in erecting new towns and villages on spacious and improved plans; in erecting work-shops and manufactories for all kinds of clothing and furniture; in distributing gas-pipes throughout villages, and along the high ways, for illuminating the country, and cheering the traveller under the cloud of night;—in these, and many other operations, all the poor who now infest our streets, and burden our public charities, and pass a miserable and useless existence,

m.ght be comfortably employed. And, while misery would thus be prevented, and happiness diffused, improvements might be carried on to an indefinite extent, the physical aspect of our globe might be transformed into a scene of beauty and fertility, and "the desert made to rejoice and blossom as the rose."

In the cases now alluded to, and in many other respects, much requires to be effected, before society be thoroughly improved, and before the scene of external nature be decorated with all the beauties and conveniences of which it is susceptible. But such improvements ought not to be engaged in, merely from the sordid views of deriving pecuniary profits; but from a desire to do good to our fellow-men; to remove nuisances both from the physical and moral world; to embellish the city, and the country, and to promote the general advancement of society, in knowledge and virtue.

It is evident, then, that were such views of the application of wealth to pervade general society, or were even a few opulent individuals to act in accordance with them, an important change would soon take place in the aspect, both of the physical and the moral world. Those scenes of squalid misery and destitution, which are now to be seen in every city, town, and village; those pitiable objects that swarm in our markets and fairs, in our streets and highways; and those wretched cellars and hovels, unfit for the abodes even of the lower animals, now inhabited by human beings, would ere long disappear from the world. The cries of misery, and the voice of mourning and sorrow, would be changed into the voice of cheerfulness, and into songs of thanksgiving and joy. Every returning year, new beauties, conveniences, and improvements, would be seen rising to view in every corner of the land; and harmony and moral order would gradually pervade the various ranks of society.

And, is hoarding up wealth in bags or coffers, or wasting it in vain show and extravagance, to be set in competition with such scenes of beauty and general enjoyment? Surely every philanthropic heart, and every

sincere Christian possessed of riches, in contributing to such objects, would feel a pleasure in beholding such results, far surpassing what can ever be experienced in indulging in "the pride of life," and in chiming in with "the fashion of the world which passeth away." And, we have already proved, in the preceding chapter, that it is *in the power* of thousands, to be instrumental in bringing about "a consummation, so devoutly to be wished;" and, it is to be hoped, that with the power, the WILL will not be wanting, and that, ere long, they will "shake themselves from the dust," and arise to vigorous exertion in the cause of God, and in promoting the best interests of men.

2. The subversion of covetousness would prepare the way *for remedying many physical evils, and promoting improvements for the convenience and comfort of general society.*

To some of these improvements, I have alluded above, but it may not be inexpedient to enter a little more particularly into the consideration of this topic.

This world, when it was first arranged by the hand of the Almighty, was completely adapted as a habitation for a creature formed after his image. Its arrangement was the result of Infinite wisdom and goodness; and, therefore, must have presented to view every thing that was harmonious, beautiful to the eye, and adapted to the sensitive and intellectual enjoyment of man. Hence we are told, that, upon a survey of all his works, in this lower creation, "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good." This beautiful arrangement of the face of nature, in all probability, continued during the greater part of the period which intervened between the creation and the deluge. But, when the flood came, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up,"—the interior strata of the earth were disrupted, mountains and rocks were hurled "into the midst of the sea," and rolled from one continent to another; the whole solid crust of the globe appears to have been shattered, and thrown

into confusion, and its surface transformed into one wide and boundless ocean. After the waters of the deluge had abated, the earth was left to Noah and his descendants, as one vast and frightful ruin, overspread with immense deserts and marshes, and rugged mountains disrobed of their verdure. For, we have reason to believe, that the greater part of the dry land which existed before the flood, now forms the bed of the ocean. This ruin of a former beautiful world, since that period, has been, in many of its parts, brought into a certain state of cultivation, in proportion as its inhabitants have risen from barbarism to civilization. But a great portion of the globe is still covered with immense deserts and almost interminable forests, fit only for the habitation of the beasts of prey; and even those countries which have been partially cultivated by the more civilized class of human beings, are far short of that improvement of which they are susceptible; or, of what must have been their appearance, when the earth was fresh from the hands of its Creator, and smiled with all the beauties of Eden.

The sin of man was the cause of the original structure of the earth being deranged, and its beauty defaced; and, in proportion as man advances to a conformity to the Divine image, after which he was originally created, —will his habitation approximate to the beauty and order which appeared in the first creation. But, "this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith," that they must now exert their own genius and physical energies, in beautifying their habitations, and reducing the globe to an approximation to its original state. And, in proportion as Christianity and civilization have prevailed, such objects have been partially accomplished. But the greater part of the world still remains as a desolate waste, or a majestic ruin; and, even where the hand of civilization has begun to operate, little comparatively has been effected; for the fields are scarcely half cultivated, and there is not the fifth part of the conveniences and comforts provided for

the great mass of the world's inhabitants which they ought to enjoy. It is *possible* to transform the earth into a terrestrial paradise, or at least into something approaching it. What has already been done is an earnest and a prelude of what may still be achieved, were wealth applied in accordance with the intention of God, and were all the physical and intellectual energies of man concentrated upon such an object. Let us look at New England, which, only about two centuries ago, was one immense forest, without the least cultivation, inhabited by a few savages. From a small colony of only a hundred individuals, these states have increased to two millions of souls. Most of the forests have been cut down, the fields cultivated and adorned, and hundreds of towns, temples, seminaries, and splendid public buildings now diversify and adorn a scene of activity which was formerly "a vast howling wilderness," where none but rude Indians and the beasts of the forests roamed for their prey. Even in our own country, in the days of Julius Cæsar, the inhabitants were rude and barbarous; they painted their bodies; they were clothed in the skins of beasts; they dwelt in huts and caves, in the forests and marshes; the land was overspread with thickets and barren wastes, and no towns, cities, or splendid edifices, such as we now behold, were to be found in any quarter of Britain, which now stands in the first rank of Christian and civilized nations. It only requires a little more beneficent exertion, and the whole British Islands might be changed into a scene of beauty and fertility little inferior to that of Eden. Nay, in a very short period, all the uncultivated wastes of the globe might be adorned with every rural beauty, and every wilderness made to bud and blossom as the rose. The money which has been spent in *warfare*, during the last century, by Great Britain alone, amounting to nearly *two thousand millions of pounds*, would have gone a great way towards defraying the expense of every thing requisite for transforming almost all the desolate wastes of the globe into scenes of beauty and vegetation. And, it is in the power of the

European nations—nay, almost in the power of Britain herself—were wealth directed into its proper channels, to accomplish nearly all that is now stated, during the next half century, if they would at this moment shake off the trammels of *ambition* and *avarice*, and arise to holy and beneficent exertions. If ever such a period as the scripture-millennium arrives, it will be ushered in by such physical improvements, in simultaneous combination with the instruction of all ranks, the energetic preaching of the gospel, and the universal extension of the revelation of God among all nations.

Let us now consider for a moment, some of the evils of the social state which should be remedied, and the improvements which should be carried into effect.

If we look into our cities and towns, we shall find them abounding with many nuisances and inconveniences—narrow streets, dirty lanes, wretched cellars, and hovels crowded with human beings, whole families with their miserable shreds of furniture cooped up in one narrow apartment, amidst gloom, filth, and disorder—no conveniences for washing, bleaching, or for enjoying the cheerful light of heaven and the refreshing breeze. In such situations, numerous diseases are engendered, the true enjoyment of life prevented, and the period of human existence cut short, by nearly the one-half of its average duration. If we inspect many of our villages, we shall find similar evils tending to human wretchedness and debasement. And, if we cast our eyes over the country, we shall find a glaring deficiency of comfortable roads, and foot-paths, and of comfortable dwellings for the industrious poor, a want of bridges for regular intercourse between villages, and a want of bowers or places of shelter to the weary traveller, either from the heat of the sun, or from rains and storms, besides marshes that might be drained, moors that might be cultivated, and many desolate wastes that might be turned into fertility and verdure, and become the seats of an industrious and happy population.

Now, all these and similar evils might be removed, and

the requisite improvements carried forward, were the principle of avarice undermined, and a noble generosity to pervade the minds of the opulent and influential class of the community. Were societies formed for promoting such objects—not for the purpose of gain or the mere employment of superfluous capital, but for the purpose of general improvement, and affording employment to the industrious labourer, we might have roads and foot-paths intersecting the country in every direction, broad, smooth, and cleanly, and adapted for comfortable travelling and pleasure walks, at all seasons of the year—cottages and garden-plots, furnished with every requisite convenience for the accommodation of the industrious classes—our marshes drained and covered with corn—our heath-clad hills adorned with ever-greens and fruitful trees—our narrow dirty lanes, where men are huddled together like rabbits in their cells, completely demolished—our confined streets expanding into crescents and spacious squares—new towns and villages arising on ample and improved plans—canals and rail-ways intersecting the country, in every direction, where they are required—schools and seminaries of all descriptions, churches, lecture-rooms, work-shops, manufactories, and asylums for the aged and infirm—diversifying the rural landscape—and the once barren desert rejoicing amidst luxuriant verdure, and with the hum of human voices and of ceaseless activity.

That such improvements will be carried forward in the days of the millennium, or prior to its commencement, appears from certain predictions which have a reference to that period. "In those days," says the prophet Isaiah, "they shall build houses and inhabit them, and plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for *as the days of a tree* are the days of my people, and they shall *long* enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."* "Then shall the earth

* Isaiah lxv.

yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shal. bless us." "Then shall he give thee rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal, and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous; and in that day thy cattle shall feed in large pastures. The seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; the evil beasts shall cease out of the land; and they shall sit every man under his vine and fig tree, and none shall make him afraid; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." The same thing may be intimated in the following passages which refer to the same period:—"Let the fields be joyful, and all that is therein, let the hills be joyful together; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth."* "I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys, I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness, the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree. I will set in the desert the fir tree and the box together; that they may see and know, and consider that the hand of the Lord hath done this."† "I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains, ye forests, and every tree therein." "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and, instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree."‡ "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."

Although several of the last quoted passages may be considered as having a reference to the *spiritual* renovation of the world, yet the *literal* meaning is not to be

* Psalm xcvi. † Isaiah xli. 18. ‡ Isaiah lv 12.

altogether excluded. For the external comforts of mankind and the natural embellishments of the earth go hand in hand with the reception of Divine truth, and the manifestation of Christian virtues. Wherever the gospel comes in its power and renewing influence upon the heart, it sooner or later brings along with it the blessings of civilization, and leads to the abandonment of rude and savage practices—to the improvement of the soil, and to the rearing of cleanly villages and comfortable habitations. This may be seen in the progress of Christianity in Southern Africa, where the narrow and filthy kraals of the Hottentots have been changed into substantial and commodious dwellings; and in the Society Isles, where gardens, villages, spacious churches, seminaries, and stately mansions, now beautify and adorn that once savage territory, so lately the seat of idolatry and "the habitations of cruelty." In these respects, "the fields" may be said to "be joyful," and "the mountains and the hills to break forth into singing, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose." Such predictions, too, seem to intimate, that the extensive deserts and tracts of barren sand now lying waste and uncultivated, and seldom trodden by the foot of man, will be brought under cultivation, and changed into a scene of delightful verdure; and that, upon the hideous wilds where Nineveh, Babylon, and other famous cities once stood, other splendid cities will be reared, congenial to the holy and elevated views of a renovated population. The following and similar passages may be fairly interpreted in this sense. "I will make the dry land springs of water, and I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle. They *shall build the old wastes*, they shall raise up the former desolations, and *they shall repair the waste cities*, the desolations of many generations."

How, then, are such glorious transformations to be effected? Are we to suppose, that God, by a direct act of his Almighty power, as at the first creation, is to sweep the dense forests from the earth, level the mountains, prepare highways for its inhabitants, and plant

with his own hand "in the wilderness, the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle?" Or are we to suppose, that angelic beings are to be sent down from heaven to perform such material operations? If not, then, they must be effected by the genius and energy of man. For, whatever man is enabled to perform, under the arrangements of the Divine government, is uniformly ascribed to God as the Supreme mover and director of every operation; and a miracle was never performed, when human agents, by the ordinary laws of nature, were able to accomplish the object intended.

And how is man to accomplish such improvements, but by employing his treasures, and his physical and mental energies in such beneficent operations? Hitherto, covetousness has prevented such desirable improvements from being effected. When requested to embark in any undertaking which has for its object the melioration of the social state, its uniform language is, "will it pay?" "will it pay?" "will it produce a proper *per centage* for the outlay of money?" implying that the acquisition of more money, is the grand stimulus which should excite us to embark in any undertaking. It is stated, for example, that certain marshes, mosses, and heath-clad hills, can never be cultivated, *because* "the expense of cultivating them would outrun the profit." This is an argument which may be allowed to a man who worships mammon as his God, and who has his portion only in the present life; but such an argument ought never to proceed from the mouth of a Christian. The grand question to be determined is, "is it expedient and requisite that such improvements should be attempted, and is it consistent with the will and purpose of God, that they should be accomplished?" If such questions can be answered in the affirmative, then all other considerations ought to be laid aside, and it ought to be deliberately considered, and laid down as a maxim, that money was bestowed by God just for such purposes, and not to be put in a bag, or "laid up in a napkin." Were such views generally recognised, and acted upon, a new impulse would be given to human activity, and a

new aspect would begin to appear throughout the scene of nature, and of general society. How many thousands are to be found in our cities and populous towns, and even in our hamlets and villages, who are living in the midst of filth and wretchedness, either altogether unemployed, or eking out a scanty pittance, scarcely sufficient to keep soul and body together, or employed in pilfering, or otner criminal pursuits, who would rejoice in the prospect of being employed in rural improvements!

Now, were some hundreds of such persons distributed, under proper superintendents, in different parts of the country, to drain a marsh, to cultivate a desert, to form new roads, to drive soil to sandy or rocky wastes, and to direct rivulets and streams of water to flow through such places; were small towns and villages, on spacious plans, to be reared in such places, and comfortable habitations for the industrious labourers; were schools established for the instruction of the young, and churches, and lecture rooms for the instruction of adults in religion, and in every branch of useful knowledge, what an amount of enjoyment might be communicated to thousands of miserable creatures, now in a state of penury and degradation? and what a beautiful transformation would appear on the aspect of "the wilderness, and the solitary place," now covered with briars and thorns, and untrodden by the foot of man! Nothing prevents such scenes from being realized, but the principle of avarice; and it becomes Christians to whom God has granted riches and property, seriously to consider, whether they be not called upon by the word and providence of God, to embark in such undertakings, although, instead of making five per cent. for their money, they should lose twice that sum in accomplishing such designs. The question with a Christian, ought not to be, what is the per centage of *money* to be acquired; but what is the per centage of *happiness* that will be gained to mankind, and of improvement on the face of nature. Let such consider what I say, and "may the Lord give them understanding in all things!"

3. Were covetousness undermined, *we might soon have institutions established for the intellectual and religious instruction of persons of all ranks and ages.*

This is a most important consideration—a subject the most momentous of any that can engage the attention of the Christian, or of members of general society. It is a subject, however, which has been most unaccountably overlooked by all ranks, and even by professed Christians and philanthropists. Innumerable facts which have lately come to light, in our own land, abundantly prove, that *ignorance* and *crime* are almost inseparably connected; and the same position is confirmed by the experience of almost every other country. Notwithstanding the severity and the multiplicity of our penal statutes, and the new enactments which are issued, year after year, against crimes, they have multiplied almost in proportion to the increase of our criminal statutes. It has been calculated, that in and about London alone, there are above fifty thousand thieves and pick-pockets. And no wonder, when we learn from the Report of the "British and Foreign School Society" for 1833, that "in the Metropolis alone, there are above 150,000 children growing up to manhood without education." In Nottingham, it is found that more than a thousand children, of an age suitable for school, are growing up in total ignorance; and, in Herefordshire, out of 41,000 individuals, only about 24,000, or little more than one half, were able to read. Instead of one out of every four attending instruction, it is estimated, that throughout Great Britain and Ireland, there is not above one out of twelve or fourteen of the population, at an average, enjoying the means of regular instruction; paltry, and inefficient, as they generally are. Without a thorough *intellectual* and *religious* education, universally extended, commencing at a very early period of life, and continued till manhood, the root of crime will never be extirpated; and although its branches may be occasionally lopped off by the sword of the law, they will always be ready to break out in fresh luxuriance

So long as the principle of crime, and those affections which lead to it, are suffered to remain without moral counteraction; human laws, however severe, will be altogether inefficient, either for eradicating, or repressing it.

An efficient education is likewise essentially necessary for preparing men to listen with attention and intelligence, to the declarations of the gospel. For want of that intelligence which education should produce, neither rational nor moral arguments make the least impression on the mind. We cannot, in many instances, persuade such persons to attend a place of worship where Scriptural instruction is communicated; and when they are constrained to enter a religious assembly, they are incapable of fixing their attention on spiritual subjects, or of understanding and appreciating the nature and importance of the truths delivered; so that the most solemn considerations and admonitions produce no more effect in exciting to repentance and serious reflections, than "a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Hence, likewise, the confused and distorted conceptions of Divine truth which are entertained by many of the regular hearers of the gospel; hence the little effect produced on their moral characters, and hence the want of holy energy, and of that noble spirit of Christian heroism and generosity, which ought to distinguish every member of a religious community.

Again, universal education is essential *for preparing the way for the arrival of the predicted millennium.* Such a period cannot possibly be ushered in, till a moral, intellectual, and religious education be universally established, and the benefits of it enjoyed by all ranks and conditions of men. It is in this and the effects which flow from it, that the *essence* of the millennium will chiefly consist. For, at that period, "all shall know Jehovah from the least to the greatest," in consequence of which "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all kindreds of the nations worship before him."

At present, we have little or nothing that truly deserves

the name of *education.* In the system of education which has hitherto prevailed in our country, almost every thing that is interesting to a rational and immortal being has been overlooked and omitted. *Words* have been substituted in place of *things;* the elements of *language* instead of the elements of *thought,* the *key* of knowledge, instead of *knowledge itself;* Pagan maxims instead of Christian principles and precepts; a farrago of trash selected from Heathen Orators, Poets, old plays, fables, romances, and novels, instead of the grand and interesting facts of sacred history, the scenes of domestic life, the useful arts and sciences, the beauties of creation, and the sublime and magnificent scenery of the universe. Man has been considered rather as a kind of machine, than as a rational intelligence, and our systems of education have treated him as if he had been little else than a puppet, formed for mechanical movements. The idea that he is a being destined to a future and eternal existence, and that his training ought to have a respect to his ultimate destination, has been almost entirely overlooked in our scholastic arrangements; and the government of the temper and conduct, according to the maxims and precepts of Christianity, has never formed a prominent object in our seminaries, either for the higher or the lower ranks of society. Besides, our scholastic instructions, deficient as they are, are not enjoyed by the one half of our population. We, therefore, require a system of education to be established, commencing at two years of age, and continued till twenty, which shall communicate to young minds *the elements of thought,* and which shall comprehend all those useful branches of knowledge in which man is interested as a rational and social intelligence, and as a candidate for a blessed immortality. Our grand object ought now to be, that there shall no one of our population who stands in need of instruction, be without the means of education, —so that, in the course of another generation, there shall not be an *ignorant,* and scarcely a vicious individual found in our land.

In order to accomplish such a grand and beneficent

object, we must have infant schools established for all classes, and throughout every corner of the land; schools for the intellectual and religious education of the young, from the age of six to the age of fourteen years; seminaries for instructing apprentices, journeymen, clerks, shopkeepers, and other classes of young men and women, from the age of fourteen to twenty, or upwards, accommodated to their conveniency, and calculated to convey to them instruction in the higher departments of knowledge and religion; and *colleges* for the moral and intellectual training of *teachers* fitted to conduct such institutions.

These, with similar institutions, and courses of lectures on every branch of knowledge, human and divine, require to be established in every district throughout the length and breadth of our land.

These are objects not only of vast importance, but which would require for their accomplishment a *vast expense*. For the island of Great Britain alone, there would require to be established no less than about *sixty thousand seminaries* of the description to which I allude; every one of which, including an apparatus, museum, and every thing else which an intellectual seminary should contain, would require at least £1200 to be devoted to its erection and establishment, which would amount to *seventy-two millions of British pounds!* Great as this sum may appear, it is only a mere *item*, when compared with the hundreds, or rather thousands of millions which, during the last century, were spent in the folly and madness of warfare. But, by what means are such sums to be raised, so long as covetousness holds its sway, as it has hitherto done, over the human mind? Neither governments, communities, nor individuals will come forward to lend their aid in promoting such objects, till the principle of avarice be undermined, and the legitimate use of wealth, on the principles of Christianity, be generally appreciated. But, were this object in some measure effected, and a principle of Christian generosity beginning to gain the ascendant, there would not be the least difficulty in accomplishing

every thing which has now been proposed. We have the *means* in our power, if we have the *will* to apply them; for there is more money spent every year in folly, extravagance, and vice, than would be amply sufficient to establish every institution requisite for the intellectual, moral, and religious instruction of persons of every age and sex, and of all ranks of the community. And, if they were once established, four or five millions annually would be sufficient for conducting their operations, and carrying forward every requisite improvement. And what a bright and enlivening prospect would then be gradually unfolding to our view! the young rising up in wisdom and knowledge, and in favour with God and man; useful knowledge and Christian principles extending their influence throughout all ranks; the principle o crime undermined and almost eradicated; property secure from the inroads of the pilferer and depredator; improvements of every description carried forward with alacrity and vigour; and harmony and order introduced into every department of the moral world.

All these and similar effects would undoubtedly be accomplished, in a greater or less degree, were we now to concentrate all our physical and mental energies on such objects, and consecrate a fair proportion of our wealth towards their accomplishment. It is by such means, we may rest assured, that God will accomplish his eternal purposes, and the predictions of his word in reference to that period when "the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together," and "when all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

4. *The progress of science and art would be promoted*, were covetousness counteracted, and a spirit of generosity diffusing itself throughout society.

The progress of the sciences and arts has generally kept pace with the progress of Christianity. They are intimately connected with religion, and have been instrumental in its propagation and extension. Without the aid

of printing, the revelations of heaven could never have been so extensively circulated as they now are, by the millions of Bibles, and other books on theology, that have issued from the press. Without the mariner's compass, and the art of navigation, we could never have visited the "isles afar off" in the midst of the ocean, to communicate to their benighted inhabitants the knowledge of salvation. Without a knowledge of the globular form of the earth, which science has demonstrated, many regions of our world could never have been explored, and we should have remained in ignorance of America, Australasia, and many other countries with which we now regularly correspond. Without a knowledge of this fact, and of the *extent* of the earth's diameter, we could not have measured the distances and magnitudes of the heavenly bodies; and, without the use of the telescope we could never have explored the magnificent scenes of the universe which it has laid open to view, and consequently could never have formed such enlarged conceptions, as we can now do, of the attributes and operations of the Creator.

It is, therefore, of importance, in a religious point of view, that science and art should be improved, and carried forward towards perfection. For the more minutely the wonders of nature are explored, the more distinctly do we perceive the traces of Infinite wisdom and intelligence, and the boundless power and goodness of Him "whose kingdom ruleth over all." In proportion, too, to the extent and accuracy of our views of the system of creation, shall we be enabled to perceive the general *harmony* which subsists between the operations of God in the visible universe, and the revelations of his word.

And, as *art* has, hitherto, facilitated the progress of the Gospel, and the extension of Christianity to distant lands, so we have reason to believe, that it will contribute still more extensively to its propagation in future ages, than it has ever yet done in the ages that are past. Great improvements are still required, both as to the *safety* and

the *rapidity* of our modes of conveyance, from one place to another, whether by sea or land. Ships require to be constructed on improved plans, less liable to be endangered by the billows of the deep, or even when striking against a shoal, and from the recent progress of invention, it is not unlikely that contrivances may be suggested for impelling them across the ocean with a greater degree of velocity than has hitherto been attained, and which may enable them to glide, *with more safety*, through the foaming billows. Locomotive engines, by land, may be brought to a still greater degree of perfection; and even balloons may be constructed with apparatus adequate to conduct them, in any direction, through the regions of the atmosphere. Agricultural instruments may be contrived for facilitating rural operations and the cultivation of the soil; and new inventions brought to light for the quick performance of all kinds of labour, so that the labouring classes may, ere long, have abundant leisure for the enjoyment of the bounties of the Creator, and for storing their minds with all kinds of knowledge, both human and divine. Our knowledge of the powers of nature, and of the functions of the animal system, may be so increased as to enable us to prevent diseases of every description; and instruments or contrivances of various kinds may be invented to ward off those disasters, and fatal effects which now so frequently flow from the operations of lightning, noxious gases, storms, and tempests, and other agents in the system of nature, which have so frequently been the cause of many accidents and calamities.

Now, it might easily be shown, that all such improvements in science and art, are intimately connected with religion, and have a bearing upon the happiness of man, and upon the propagation, and the universal establishment of Christianity throughout the world. But, *without money*, such improvements cannot be effected. Many persons of genius, who have hit upon useful inventions, have been obliged to drop the prosecution of their plans, when they were nearly ripe for execution, for want of pecuniary means to carry them into effect. And, in nu-

merous instances, when a model, or small machine has been constructed to illustrate the operation of a certain principle or theory, the want of money or patronage has prevented its being exhibited on a large scale, so as to demonstrate its practical utility; and all the labour, anxiety, and expense, previously incurred, have been wasted to no purpose.* But if avarice were transformed into generosity, and generosity directed to patronize and assist schemes which are praiseworthy, and of practical utility, many useful contrivances, which are now in embryo, might soon be brought to perfection, and rendered subservient to the good of mankind.

Those who are possessed of wealth, have it not only in their power to patronize persevering genius, but to establish lectures on science, and every branch of useful knowledge; to build lecture-rooms, to provide apparatus, to erect observatories, to found museums in towns, villages, and all parts of the country; and, in proportion as science is extended, and the number of rational inquirers and experimenters is increased, may we expect, that new

* A scientific gentleman, of very limited income, had, for several years, devoted a considerable portion of his time to experiments, tending to prove, that a beautiful and *permanent* light may be obtained from electricity, and has already exhibited an apparatus and experiments on a small scale, which prove, that the object intended is likely to be effected, could funds be procured to encourage the ingenious and persevering inventor, and enable him to go forward with his experiments on a larger scale. A nobleman in the neighbourhood, distinguished for his "liberal politics," lately paid a visit to the inventor, and was gratified in witnessing some of the experiments. He told him to persevere, and if the plan succeeded, as was expected, he would have his mansion illuminated by this electrical light. But although he must have known that the inventor's income was extremely limited, and that he must have denied himself most of the comforts of life, from having laid out so much expense in conducting his experiments, he never thought of saying to him, "I'll give you a hundred guineas to enable you to perfect your invention, and to bring it forth for the good of mankind;" although he could well afford it, and has, doubtless, spent ten times that sum for a worse purpose. Such, however, is the conduct of avarice, combined with indifference to the promotion of the good of society.

facts will be elicited from the system of nature, and new inventions brought to light for the improvement of the social state of mankind. The sums wasted in extravagance and luxury, in gambling, horse-racing, and hounding, or hoarded for the purpose of gratifying a covetous propensity, might, when applied in this way, draw forth the latent sparks of genius, and prove a powerful stimulus to inventions and enterprises, which might contribute to the advancement of society, and to the counteraction both of physical and moral evil.

5. *The progress of Christianity through the world would be rapidly promoted*, were the inordinate love of wealth thoroughly subdued.

It is evident, from the general tenor of the Scriptures, and particularly from the writings of the prophets, that the blessings of salvation are intended to be enjoyed by all the nations of the world. "It is a light thing," (saith God, when addressing Messiah,) "that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.*" Hence, it was among the last instructions that Christ delivered to the apostles, and to all their successors in their name: "Go ye *into all the world* and preach the gospel to every creature; and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Notwithstanding the lapse of 1800 years since this commission was given to the followers of the Redeemer, it has only been very partially fulfilled. Darkness still covers the greater part of the earth, and gross darkness the people. The greater portion of the vast continents of Asia and Africa, a great proportion of America, and even of the southern parts of Europe; almost the whole of Australasia, the immense islands of Borneo, Sumatra, Madagascar, the Kuriles, Japan, and hundreds of other islands, inhabited by millions of human beings, still lie within the confines of Pagan darkness, where scarcely a ray of Divine light has yet penetrated "to guide" their benighted inhabitants

'in the way of peace." Even in those nations where the religion of Jesus is known and established, the inhabitants are not yet half christianized, and multitudes "are perishing for lack of knowledge," even where the sound of the gospel is heard, and its light shining around them, for want of proper instruction to arouse their attention.

To fulfil the commission of Christ, and to bring into effect the purposes of God in the conversion of the nations, will therefore require vast and long continued exertions. If our future movements be as slow, and our energies as feeble as they have been for 300 years past, we could not expect to behold the glory of the millennium till after the lapse of two thousand years. Yet it is in our power, as agents under the guidance of the Divine spirit, to hasten the approach of the blissful era, within little more than half a century, if we, at this moment, arouse ourselves from apathy and spiritual slumber, and bring forth all the treasures at our command to carry forward the enterprise. But without wealth, and that, too, to a vast amount, nothing of any great importance can be achieved. If the principle of covetousness shall still hold possession of the soul, as it has done for ages past, and if even Christians will entrammel themselves in the cords of avarice, and refuse to come forward with that noble generosity which becomes their character, and lay down their wealth "at the feet" of the messengers of salvation, as was done on the day of Pentecost, our hopes of the *speedy* conversion of the world will be miserably disappointed.

What is all that has been done hitherto, in propagating the gospel, compared with *what might have been done*, had we been deeply impressed with the *importance* of such enterprises, and acted in the character of devoted servants of the Redeemer, "who count all things but loss," in comparison of the interests of his kingdom? All that has hitherto been raised for missionary purposes within the last twenty years, (and it is chiefly within this period that such enterprises have been in operation) is little more than two or three millions of pounds, when at

least five times such a sum might have been raised every year, had we been animated with any thing like the spirit and the holy zeal of the primitive Christians. This is evident from what has been stated in the preceding chapter. Were thousands of Christians, on whom God has bestowed property and riches, to consecrate—not the whole of their estates, as was done at the period alluded to—but only the one-half, what immense sums for rearing the spiritual temple might speedily be raised! And such sums are almost indispensably requisite. We have a work of immense extent and importance to accomplish. We require thousands, and ten thousands of preachers, missionaries, catechists, linguists, translators, schoolmasters, lecturers, and other labourers, to be trained for their respective departments of sacred labour. We require them to be *more thoroughly trained* than they have ever yet been for the services to which they are devoted. It is not enough that a missionary, of any description, be a man of piety, though this qualification is essentially requisite. He should, if possible, be a man of universal knowledge, having his mind richly imbued with all the information he can acquire on sacred and civil history, mythology, science and art, and the system of nature, in all its departments; for he will find abundant scope for all his acquirements, wherever he may labour in the heathen world, and particularly among those tribes that have made certain advances towards a state of civilization. From such sources, he must occasionally draw his illustrations of Divine subjects, and his proofs of the facts and doctrines of revelation; and endeavour to make general knowledge on every useful subject, go hand in hand with his expositions of the Christian system. In particular, he should be thoroughly acquainted both with the theory and practice of the most efficient modes of intellectual and moral instruction, to which I lately alluded; in order that he may seize on the first opportunities of imbuing the minds of the young with general knowledge, and with the facts and principles of religion. I am fully convinced that far more converts will be made from among the heathen, by

the early and judicious instruction of the young, than by preaching to the adult population, though both plans should be attended to, and go hand in hand. By arranging a judicious system of education for the young, we may strike at the root of those heathenish opinions, practices, and prejudices, which have so powerful an influence over adults in preventing the reception of Divine truth; and have it in our power to prepare the youthful mind for listening with attention to the truths and historical details of Christianity, when they arrive at riper years. Such seminaries would undoubtedly prove "nursing mothers" to the church, from which the greater part of the young would come forth to consecrate themselves to the service of the Redeemer, and to the promotion of the prosperity of his kingdom.

Now, in order to accomplish such objects, we require colleges to be founded, and professors appointed for instructing students and intended missionaries, in all those branches of knowledge with which they ought to be acquainted. We require, as their instructors, men of general information, of talent and piety, who will render their lectures and other instructions, as popular and perspicuous as possible; and who, on every branch of science, will point out the moral and religious purposes to which it may be applied, and direct their students to render every department of human knowledge subservient to the interests of Christianity. We require, that our missionaries be possessed of vigorous mental powers, and that they be instructed in the best modes of infant education, and that they actually practice as teachers of such institutions, as well as in conducting those of a higher order, that they may be quite familiar with all the details connected with such seminaries, and be competent to superintend them wherever they can be established in heathen countries. We require that they should have a competent acquaintance with the construction of the instruments connected with science, and modern improvements, and the manner of applying them to practical purposes, so that they may be enabled to explain and exhibit them in

the countries whither they are sent, and to introduce among their inhabitants whatever may tend to gratify a rational curiosity, or to promote their physical comfort. For all such purposes, funds to a considerable extent are required, for creating seminaries—for salaries to professors—for supporting students—for sending out missionaries—for supporting them for a season—for apparatus for infant-schools and other seminaries—for books on general knowledge, and the instruments connected with science, husbandry, and the mechanical arts. And whence are funds to be supplied if the spirit of covetousness is not counteracted and subdued?

We have, hitherto, been parsimonious in the extreme, in our contributions for missionary purposes, and we have been almost equally parsimonious in the training and preparation required for our missionaries, and in the equipment and encouragement afforded them. We ought to serve God, in all cases, and in this in particular, "*with our best;*" with the highest talents, and the greatest measure of acquired knowledge we can command; and with all the auxiliaries for facilitating the work in view, which Christian wisdom can devise; and then we may go forth with confidence, trusting in Him "who hath the residue of the spirit," that he will render our endeavours, when conducted with wisdom, successful for promoting the extension of his spiritual kingdom. Let Christians, then, seriously ponder on this subject, and consider whether there be not an *urgent call* addressed to them in the providence of God, to awake from their slumbers, and come forth with their treasures, in a far more liberal manner than they have ever yet done, to assist in rearing the spiritual temple of Jehovah.

Some years ago, I was conversing with a shrewd and intelligent gentleman on the subject of missionary operations, who seemed to think that there was too much fuss and bustle about such enterprises, when so much is required to be done at home with the money expended on such objects. "I do not think," he said, "that the heathen are in so wretched and *dangerous* a state as many of

our religionists represent, and would have us believe;—but, if I really thought, that they were perishing for lack of knowledge, and exposed to everlasting misery on this account, and if preaching the gospel to them would prevent their destruction—then I admit, that we all ought either to embark as missionaries, or sell the greater part of our property in order to send messengers for their deliverance. We ought even to sell all that we have, to our last coat, if such an object might thereby be accomplished." And does not every Christian, at least theoretically, admit that the heathen nations are in a *dangerous* situation, as here supposed, and exposed to misery in the life to come? Whatever opinions we may form of the salvable state of any small portion of the Pagan world, it is a *fact*, that the great majority of heathens, by the malignant passions and ferocious tempers they display, appear altogether *unfitted* and *unprepared* for the enjoyments of the celestial world; and consequently, cannot in such a state, be admitted into the mansions of bliss, and if their existence be prolonged, when they pass from this earthly scene, it must of necessity be an existence connected with misery. It must, therefore, be an object of the *greatest moment* to embark in an undertaking which has for its grand aim, to enlighten "the people who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace," and to prepare them for glory and immortality. And although we were "to sell the half of our goods," and devote it to such objects, we should do no more than the importance and the eternal consequences of such enterprises evidently require.

There is now a call, and an *urgent* call, from tribes and nations in every quarter of the globe, to send to them the messengers of peace and salvation. "The wilderness and the solitary places, the isles and the inhabitants thereof are lifting up their voices" from afar to the people of Britain and America, to send to them the revelations of heaven, and missionaries to expound them. India alone, at this moment, requires at least a thousand en-

lightened and devoted men to sow the seed of the Divine word, and to refresh the spiritual wilderness of that vast heathen territory with the streams of salvation. Ethiopia is beginning to stretch out her hands to God, and many of her sable sons are now waiting for his salvation, and hailing the arrival of the messengers of peace. The inhabitants of the frozen regions of Greenland, Labrador, and Siberia, are imploring Divine instruction from Christian nations, and thousands of Negroes under the scorching suns of the West Indies, are ardently longing to be furnished with copies of the book of God. The Chinese are now beginning to enquire after the Oracles of heaven, and the arts and sciences of Christian nations. Even from "the ends of the earth," from the distant barbarous isles of the Pacific, the cry is now heard in our land, "Britons, come over and help us!" Their inhabitants are trembling lest the messenger of death should seize them, before the ships that convey British missionaries appear in their horizon, and lest a sufficient number should not arrive. They are "lifting up their voices from their rocks, and shouting from the tops of their mountains," in expectation of the heralds of the prince of peace, and are ready to receive them with open arms. And will *Christians*, who profess to be infinitely indebted to the Redeemer who purchased them with his blood—who profess to regard SALVATION as of all things the most desirable and *momentous*, and who would tremble at the thought of the possibility of their own eternal destruction —will Christians, to whom God has given wealth, suffer their minds to be so governed by the "mammon of unrighteousness," that they will refuse to bring forth their treasures at his call, as the means of "delivering those who are ready to perish," and rescuing their souls from destruction? If so, where is their love to the Saviour? where is their benevolence towards men? where is their belief of the importance of eternal realities? and where is the evidence they give that they ought to be distinguished by the Christian name?

O! into what a blissful scene might this ruin of a world

yet be transformed, were covetousness thoroughly subdued, and were only those who profess to be Christians, to come forth with unanimity, and lay down their superfluous treasures at the foot of the cross! In the short space of little more than half a century to come, we might behold celestial light diffusing its radiance over the most distant and benighted regions of the globe; the idols of the nations abolished; the savage raised to the dignity of his moral and intellectual nature, and his mind adorned with the beauties of holiness; the instruments of warfare broken to shivers, and peace shedding its benign influence over the world; temples erected in every land for the worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the minds of the young irradiated with Divine knowledge, and rising up in wisdom, and in favour with God and man; the principle of crime extirpated, and poverty and wretchedness banished from the earth; the moral wilderness of the heathen world cultivated and adorned with every heavenly virtue and grace; the wastes and wilds of the globe transformed into fertile regions, and arrayed in all the beauties of Eden; the hatred and jealousy of nations changed into benevolence, and a friendly and harmonious intercourse established between all the tribes and families of the earth!

And is not the prospect of the mere *possibility* of accomplishing such objects, sufficient to quicken every Christian activity and to draw forth every generous emotion? more especially when we consider that such events are predicted in the records of ancient prophecy; that the certainty of their being realized is confirmed by the declaration and the oath of God; and that the energies of the Divine spirit are promised to accompany our endeavours and to secure their ultimate success? Let us then, arise and "shake ourselves from the dust"—from the dust of carnal maxims and worldly views; and be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, so (saith Jehovah,) shall

my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that *unto me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear.* For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, till the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory. For, behold I create new heavens and a new earth,* and the former shall not be remembered nor come to mind. But, be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."†

6. *We might expect the* SPEEDY *arrival of the millennial era,* were a spirit of Christian generosity universally to prevail.

To this topic I have already had occasion to allude, particularly in the preceding section, and I shall therefore offer only a few additional remarks.

That a period is about to arrive when the physical and moral condition of the human race, is to be greatly meliorated, when the ignorance and idolatry of the heathen world are to be abolished, and when Divine truth shall extend its influence over all nations, is clearly predicted in the writings of the Jewish prophets. In these writings it is declared, that "the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed,

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* The "new heavens and new earth" here mentioned, evidently denote the renovation of the physical, moral, and spiritual world, at the period when the gospel shall be universally extended, by which, a change, in these respects, will be effected, which, in prophetic language, may be very properly compared to a new creation, on ccount of the contrast it will exhibit to the state of the world in preceding ages. That the passage does not refer to the period of the resurrection, appears from what is stated in the sequel of this chapter. Isaiah lxv.

† Isaiah lv. 10, 11; xlv. 23; lxii. 1, 2; lxv. 17, 18, 25.

and *all flesh shall see it together*"—that "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord"—that "*the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*"—that "Jehovah shall make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"—that "the heathen shall be given to the Redeemer for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession"—that "all kings shall fall down before him, all nations serve him, and the whole earth be filled with his glory."

Predictions of this description, run through most parts of the inspired writings, and are embodied in numerous passages which we are apt to overlook, particularly in the Book of Psalms. All the calls, or commands to praise God, which are addressed to the inhabitants of the world at large, may be considered as including predictions of such events; as in the following and similar passages: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord *all the earth*, make a loud noise, and sing praise." "Sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord *all the earth*. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, fear before him all the earth. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth, O sing praises to Jehovah." "O praise the Lord *all ye nations*, praise him all ye people," &c.

And, since God has given a *universal call* to all people to engage in his service, we may rest assured, that this call will, at some future period, be universally responded to by the inhabitants of every clime. For the word which has proceeded out of the mouth of Jehovah, shall not return to him void, but shall accomplish the purposes of his will. "His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." In accordance with such calls, we find likewise, in the Book of Psalms, many positive declarations on this subject. "*All the earth shall worship thee*, they shall sing to thy name." "The people shall praise thee, O God, *all the people* shall praise thee. God shall bless us, the fields shall yield their increase, and *all the ends of the earth* shall fear him." "The heathen snall fear the name of the Lord, and *all the kings of the earth*

thy glory." "All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name." "All the kings of the earth shall praise the Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth." "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, God's name is to be praised." "Kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth, both young men and maidens, old men and children, shall praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent, and his glory is above the earth and heavens." *Our duty*, in reference to the promotion of such events, is likewise plainly declared. "O bless our God, ye people, and *make the voice of his praise to be heard.*" "*Declare his glory among the heathen; his wonders among all people.*" "Thy saints *shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom*, and talk of thy power, *to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts*, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom."

The above passages, although there were no others recorded in the book of God, on this subject,—clearly point to a period, when the moral state of the world shall be regenerated, when persons of all ranks shall do homage to the Redeemer, and when the light of Divine truth shall shed its radiance on every land. It is of importance that a clear conviction of the certainty of such events should be deeply impressed upon the mind of every professor of religion; as some who call themselves Christians, have not only insinuated, but openly declared, that the state of the world will never be much better than it is; and, consequently, that we need give ourselves little trouble in making exertions for the regeneration of society—which is just, in other words, an apology for indulgence in covetousness. But nothing, I presume, can be more decisive, in reference to the approach of the millennial era, than the passages we have now quoted, if the word of God is not to be deemed fallacious.

This period, we trust, is now fast approaching; and our duty in reference to it, is clearly pointed out; "declare his glory among the heathen, and his wonders among *all people*. Prepare ye the way of the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God. O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah," and to the tribes of the heathen, "behold your God." While we engage in our duty in reference to such events, we have full assurance of direction and support from Him, who is the moral governor of the world, and the Supreme disposer of events. When it is declared that "all the ends of the earth shall turn to the Lord, and all kindreds of the nations worship before him"—it is added, "for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the nations." And, consequently, he can remove every obstruction out of the way, and arrange every event in such a manner as to facilitate the progress of Divine truth through the world, till, at length, "the everlasting gospel shall be preached to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

The only thing to be determined, is, whether that renovated and happy state of the world, which we call the *millennium*, shall be introduced by some astonishing miracles, such as happened at the creation, and the deluge; or, by the agency of Christian men under the influence of the Divine Spirit, devoting all their talents, energies, and treasures, to the accomplishment of this object. For the former supposition, I know no arguments grounded either on reason, or the dictates of revelation.

To suppose the Almighty, to interpose by such miracles to accomplish such events, would be contrary to every thing we know of the principles of the Divine government, or of its operations during the lapse of more than four thousand years. At the introduction, indeed, of the New Testament economy, miracles were wrought by Jesus Christ, to demonstrate to the world his Messiahship, and a similar power was conferred on his Apostles, to convince their hearers, wherever they travelled, that they were the messengers of heaven, and that they had authority for the truths they declared. But no miraculous change was effected in the general order, either of

the physical or the moral world. It might be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that, throughout the whole train of the Divine dispensations towards our world, *there was never a miracle performed to accomplish any object, when that object could have been effected in consistency with the established laws of nature.*

Now, men, "as workers together with God," are adequate to accomplish all that is predicted respecting the happiness and glory of the millennial era, provided they arouse themselves to holy energy and activity, and are WILLING to consecrate their mental powers, and their worldly *riches* to the promotion of this noble object. Besides, were the millennium to be introduced by a sudden miracle, it would deprive the saints of God, both of the *honour* which will be conferred upon them, in being instrumental in preparing the way for its arrival, and of the *happiness* they will feel in beholding the Divine plans gradually accomplishing, and their own exertions crowned with success.

For, since the physical and moral state of the world has been deranged by the sin of man, and since God in his mercy has determined to effect its regeneration, it ought to be considered as a high honour conferred upon his people, that he has been pleased to select them as agents in accomplishing his benevolent designs; and al. who are "right-hearted men," will enrol themselves in the service of the Redeemer, as Christian heroes, to increase the number of his subjects, and to extend his kingdom over the world; and to this service, they will account it their greatest happiness to devote all their wealth and treasures. "This honour have all the saints;" and it is to be hoped, they will now come forward, with cheerfulness, and alacrity, in numerous bands, casting their treasures at his feet, "and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

If, then, it be admitted, that the millennium will be ushered in by the exertions of the friends of the Redeemer, in conjunction with the agency of the Spirit of God; the most *energetic means* ought now to be employed, and

with unremitting activity, in order to accomplish this desirable *end*. And, as those means involve a consecration of a far greater portion of wealth than has ever yet been devoted to the service of God, the principle of covetousness, in all the shapes it assumes, must be almost completely extirpated, and new principles acted upon, in relation to the appropriation of riches, before we can expect to behold those arrangements going forward, which are requisite to bring about this "consummation so devoutly to be wished." Christians may *wish*, and *hope*, and *pray* with apparent fervour, for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, and the glory of the latter days—they may profess to celebrate his death, to celebrate his praise, and may make a great stir and bustle about adhering to his cause and testimony; but unless they put their hands in their pockets to supply the means requisite for accomplishing the benevolent purposes of God, our expectations of the *near* arrival of the millennium will be frustrated; and their conduct can be considered as only a mockery of God, while, under profession of serving him, "their hearts are still going after their covetousness."

The arrangements requisite for preparing the way for the approach of the millennium, have already been stated in the preceding sections.

Abundant provision requires to be made to promote the external comfort of the poor, and other ranks of society; many physical evils require to be remedied; improvements of every description carried forward; the wastes and deserts of the earth, cultivated and adorned; old cities and towns cleared of every nuisance; and new towns and villages erected on spacious and improved plans, adapted to health, cheerfulness, and comfort. Seminaries require to be established for the instruction of all ranks, in every department of knowledge, connected with the life that now is, and the life to come, without which the foundations of the millennial state cannot be laid. All the useful arts and sciences must be promoted and carried towards perfection, as auxiliaries to the extension of the gospel and the renovation of the

world. Missionary enterprises must be carried on with more vigour, and on a scale far more extensive than they have ever yet been, before we can expect to behold the dawnings of the millennial glory.

In order to accomplish such objects, it is evident, that vast resources of wealth are absolutely requisite; resources a hundred times greater than have hitherto been consecrated to the service of God, and the benefit of man. But, I have already shown, that we have wealth adequate to every purpose now suggested, if we choose to employ it in such achievements. Instead of a quarter of a million, we might raise fifty, or even a hundred millions of pounds *annually*, to promote the extension of Messiah's kingdom, the improvement of society, and the regeneration of the world. And, while such sums are raised, and employed in such operations, no want of real comfort would be felt, but on the contrary, a degree of rational and sensitive enjoyment, far superior to what has ever been experienced in the world.

It was lately stated, in some of our periodicals, that there are in and about London, about two or three hundred individuals, whose fortunes, combined, would be nearly sufficient to pay off the whole of our National debt, now amounting to above £800,000,000. What would the half, or even the tenth part of such wealth not accomplish, were it applied in consistency with the dictates of reason and religion? But where do we ever find such an appropriation of such abundant riches? Is it not a proof, or something approximating to it, that we might be characterized rather as a nation of atheists and infidels, than as a nation of *Christians*, when so little of our national wealth flows into Christian and philanthropic channels? Let us no longer boast of Britain being by way of eminence a *Christian* land, till we display more Christian principle in our actions, and a more noble spirit of Christian liberality than we have done for ages past. If we wish to lay claim to this sacred name, let us show by our Christian virtues, our Christian generosity, and our heavenly aims, that we are entitled to this distinguishing appellation.

For raising such contributions as those to which I allude—I, in the mean time, look to *Christians alone*, and not to nations or communities, that have assumed that name. As for those who are governed by carnal maxims, and the fashion of the world, we might as soon attempt to control the laws of nature, or to reason with the tornado, or the whirlwind, as to expect that any arguments, however powerful, will make the least impression on their hearts, or induce them to alter the conduct they have hitherto pursued.

But, I trust, that amidst all the apathy that prevails in regard to this subject, there are still many thousands in our land, who only require to have their duty clearly set before them, in order to excite them to the noblest displays of Christian beneficence. And, if they were once aroused to devote their wealth to the cause of the Redeemer, and to come boldly forward as Christian heroes, in the face of the world, "counting all things but loss," in comparison of the prosperity and extension of Messiah's kingdom—their example, I doubt not, would prove a powerful stimulus to thousands of Christians in other parts of the world, to embark in the same glorious undertaking.

It is strange, it is passing strange—it is wonderful, it is passing wonderful! that Christians should have been so long sunk into a state of apathy on such a subject, and that they should never yet have come forward with treasures corresponding to their high and heavenly character, and to the greatness of the work they are called upon to achieve. Had God commanded us to forsake houses and lands, and friends, and country—to sell all that we have, and devote it to his service, and to depend every day for our sustenance on whatever his providence might supply, it would have been our duty cheerfully to have acquiesced in such an arrangement, in gratitude for the spiritual benefits he had conferred; "for the sufferings of the present time are not to be compared" with the glories of futurity. But when he requires from us only the superfluities of our wealth, which are not essential to our

comfort, and which are generally devoted to "the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," why should we hesitate a moment to devote all we can spare from moderate personal enjoyment, to the service of the Most High? Is it consistent with a man's being a Christian, indeed, and in truth, to hesitate for any length of time on this subject? Were Christ now to demand of wealthy Christians what he once demanded of the young man who came to enquire the way to eternal life, "Go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and take up thy cross and follow me," how would many of them reply to such an injunction? We are in the habit of *condemning* the choice of this rich man, in having his heart so much glued to the world, and in preferring *temporal* enjoyments to *eternal* realities. But let me ask, how many British professing Christians, were the same requisition addressed to them, would act in a different manner? And, if there be any who can lay their hands upon their hearts, and say, as in the presence of God, that they would be willing "to forsake all" at his command, let them now come forth, in the face of the church and the world, and consecrate to the service of the Redeemer, all that they can possibly spare in consistency with rational enjoyment.

Let none imagine that the views now stated are utopian, or inconsistent with reason or revelation. To accomplish every object which has been adverted to, we require nothing more than the *faculties*, and the *wealth* which now exist in society. The only *desideratum* lies in the human will. *Will* men come forward with all their energies and riches in this glorious cause? Secure the co-operations of the human *will*, and I should have no fear of the grand result, nor of any arguments that could be brought forward to show its impracticability. I defy any believer in revelation *to prove* that the grand objects alluded to are *impracticable*. Is it impracticable to cultivate barren wastes, and to turn the wilderness into fruitful fields? Have not Britain and the Eastern States of America been cleared of their ancient forests, and been transformed into gardens and cultivated plains? and where savages

once roamed among caves and thickets, are there not splendid cities, palaces, temples, and seats of learning every where to be seen? Is it impracticable to arrange and establish a system of moral and intellectual instruction for all ranks of men? Are there not thousands of seminaries, both in Europe and America, and millions receiving instruction at them, where, a century ago, no such institution existed? Is it impracticable to convert savage nations to the Christian faith, and to bring them into a state of civilization and social comfort? Hove not thousands and ten thousands of rude Hottentots, and the idolatrous savages of the Isles of the Pacific, been turned from heathen darkness, to the light of the gospel, and raised from a state of degradation, to the enjoyment of the blessings of civilized life, within the course of the last thirty years? In such instances, we behold at least a *partial* accomplishment of the objects to which we allude; and on the principle that "whatever man *has* done, man *may do*," it requires nothing more than an indefinite *increase* of the same energies we have already put forth, and a greater proportion of wealth to assist in carrying forward such energies, in order to bring into effect every thing requisite for the regeneration of the world.

Above all, can we say, that it is impracticable to bring about what God has positively declared shall be realized in our world? He hath given forth his decree, and "sworn by his holiness," and "by the right hand of his strength," to secure its accomplishment—that "the whole earth shall be filled with his glory, and all flesh see it together"—that "the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all things of the earth his glory"—that "there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy, in all his holy mountain,"—and that "righteousness and praise shall spring forth before all nations." And we know, that "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure," for "the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations," and "all his saints are in his hand," as instruments to execute his designs.

Shall it then be said, that the physical and moral reno-

vation of the world is impracticable? or that it is impossible to raise a hundred millions of pounds, every year, for such an object, when no less than *fifty millions* are annually expended in Great Britain and Ireland *for ardent spirits alone*. It is calculated, that there are in the British metropolis alone, upwards of *one hundred thousand* confirmed dram-drinkers, who drink, on an average, two glasses of spirits a day, which allowing only $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per glass, makes £1250 daily spent in dram-drinking, which, in a single year, amounts to the enormous sum of £456,250, or nearly half a million of pounds, which is nearly double of what is contributed by all the Bible and Missionary Societies of Britain. And shall less than the twelfth part of the population of London spend such an enormous sum in such vicious and degrading practices, and shall the whole inhabitants of Britain not raise the one half of it for promoting the most glorious and important object to which our aims can be directed? A most glaring deficiency in Christian principle and liberality must exist, where such incongruities occur; and, it is now more than time for Christians to ask themselves, what they have been doing with their money. A labouring dram-drinker can devote two shillings a week, or nearly five guineas a year, to his demoralizing habits, while a wealthy Christian, with five times his income, contents himself, perhaps, with the contribution of a single guinea, or even less, for promoting the kingdom of Christ, and the eternal salvation of men! Such an inconsistency ought no longer to exist among those who assume the Christian name. Let them either take their stand at once, among the men of the world, who attempt to serve both God and mammon, or come forward like noble champions of the cross, and consecrate to the honour of God, treasures worthy of the sublime and glorious undertaking, which they are called upon to achieve.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR THE COUNTERACTION OF COVETOUSNESS.

Every improvement in society is brought about by exertion, and by the diligent use of those means which are best calculated to promote the end intended. Christianity was introduced into the world, and rapidly extended over many nations, by the unwearied labours of the apostles, who travelled into remote countries, submitting to numerous hardships, dangers, and privations, and "counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might testify the gospel of the grace of God," and promote the salvation of men. Had the same holy ardour which animated those first ambassadors of the Prince of Peace, been displayed by their successors, the world would have been in a very different state from that in which we now behold it. It is owing to our apathy and inactivity as Christians, that so many immoralities and unholy principles are to be found displaying their baneful effects around us, and that so little has been done for the advancement of society, and the evangelization of heathen nations. If we wish to behold a work of reformation going forward, and Zion beginning to appear "beautiful and glorious in the eyes of the nations," we must arouse ourselves from our indolence, and seize upon every means by which vice and every malignant principle may be counteracted and thoroughly subdued. And as covetousness lies near the foundation of most of the evils connected with general society, and with a profession of Christianity, it becomes us to use every rational and Christian mean, which may have a tendency to crush its power, and to promote the exercise of opposite affections. Some of the means by

which this unholy principle may be subdued, have already been alluded to, and embodied in the form of motives and arguments addressed to the consciences of professors of religion. In addition to these, I shall suggest only two or three particulars.

1. *Frequent preaching on this subject, and occasional public sermons for the purpose of illustrating it,* should be resorted to for the purpose of counteracting this malignant affection.

There is, perhaps, no mode by which so powerful an impression may be made on any subject, on the minds of Christians in general, as by the *viva voce* discourses of a respected, eloquent, and enlightened preacher, especially if his discussions be enlivened by vivid representations of sensible objects, and appeals to striking *facts* connected with his subject. Such appeals can scarcely be altogether resisted by persons impressed with religious principle; and it is to be regretted that Christians have not more frequently, in this way, been stirred up to a performance of their duty. Nor ought it to be considered as deviating from *the preaching of the gospel,* when such subjects are introduced into the pulpit. For they are intimately connected with the progress of Divine truth; and the gospel can never *extensively* take effect, nor its principles be fully acted upon in Christian society, till such subjects be pointedly and publicly brought forward, and undergo the most serious and solemn consideration. But it requires to be carefully attended to, that no preacher come forward publicly to denounce covetousness, and to attempt to stir up Christians to liberality, who is himself known, or *suspected* to be under the influence of a worldly or avaricious disposition. The most vivid representations, and the most pathetic appeals of such a preacher would only rebound from the hearts of his audience, like an arrow from a wall of marble. For how can a man who is continually aspiring after wealth, living in splendour, yet grumbling on account of the smallness of his income, and who seldom gives in proportion to his ability to any

philanthropic object; how could such a one expect, by the most splendid oration, to produce a deep and moral impression upon his hearers? For example, in this, as well as in every other case, would have a more powerful effect than precept.

A few months ago, I was conversing with a gentleman on this subject, who mentioned several honourable examples of liberality connected with the congregation of which he is a member; some of whom, who only occupied a medium station in life, contributed to the amount of twenty and thirty pounds yearly for public religious purposes, so that the whole congregation raised £500 or £600 annually, for missionary and other purposes, besides the regular maintenance of the gospel among themselves. His minister, he said, maintained the principle, that every Christian should, at least, devote the one-tenth of his income for religious purposes. I asked him the amount of the minister's stipend, and was informed that it was at least £450 per annum. I then inquired if his minister set an example to his hearers, and by acting in accordance with his own principle, and if it was a fact that he devoted £45 per annum to religious and philanthropic objects? The reply was, "I am sure he does not." "To what amount, then, does he contribute for such purposes?" "About eight or ten pounds annually, at the utmost." "If this be the case," I replied, "I should scarcely have had the effrontery to inculcate such a principle upon others;" and I was given to understand, that, in this case, the discrepancy between his conduct and the principle admitted, was beginning to be particularly marked. Why should ministers, particularly those who have handsome incomes, consider themselves as exceptions to a general rule? If they do not set an example of liberality in their conduct, all their instructions on this point will go for nothing, and be only as "a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal."

2. Christian churches should strictly investigate the conduct of their members, in relation to the portion of wealth they devote to religious objects.

Those members of a Christian church whose incomes are generally known, and who are remiss on this point, ought to be calmly reasoned with as to their duty in this respect, on scriptural grounds, and in accordance with the principles and obligations they admit as Christians. And if they obstinately resist every argument and admonition addressed to them, and refuse to give a fair proportion of their substance to the service of Him from whom they derived it, they ought to be suspended from the peculiar privileges of Christian society. The church of Christ has undoubtedly a *right* to take cognizance of its members, as to this point, as well as when they are chargeable with a breach of duty in any other respect, or found guilty of a direct violation of the laws of God. We are too apt to imagine (and custom has long sanctioned the opinion) that the censures of the church are only to be inflicted on those who are guilty of what the world terms *scandals;* and many professors of religion are thus led to consider themselves as acting a dutiful part in Christian society, if no such scandals can be proved against them. But the non-performance of duty is equally sinful, and as regularly denounced in scripture, as the direct commission of vicious actions. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; doth not He who pondereth the heart consider it?" "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" The unprofitable servant who hid his talent in the earth, is not accused of drunkenness, uncleanness, licentiousness, or any similar crime, yet, because he misimproved the talent committed to his trust, he is doomed to the same punishment as the most flagrant workers of iniquity. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." It is by the regular performance of duty, more than by freedom from vicious practices, that the reality of Christian principle is displayed. There is, perhaps, nothing that brings a man's Christian character to a more decisive

test, both to his own conscience, and in the eyes of others, than the circumstance of his *voluntarily* and perseveringly devoting a fair proportion of his wealth to the service of God, and the benefit of mankind. A worldly-minded man may continue for a considerable time to attend Divine ordinances, and make a fair *profession* of religion, while no regular demands are made upon his purse; but when called upon to contribute regularly, at least the tenth part of his income, it is more than probable he would display the latent avarice of his heart, by mustering up a host of carnal arguments against such a demand, and would soon take his station, where he ought to be, among the men of the world. But, if a man of wealth devote one-third, one-fourth, or even one-tenth of his riches to the cause of God and religion, and act a consistent part in other respects, a Christian church possesses, perhaps, the most tangible evidence they can demand of such a man's religious principle.

There is a certain false delicacy which some religious communities seem to feel in meddling with the pecuniary affairs or allotments of individuals, and especially of those who are wealthy, or who move in the higher spheres of society. They are afraid lest the pride of such persons should be hurt by such plain dealing—lest they should fly off at a tangent from their community, and lest the funds of their society should be injured by their withdrawment. But, although it is proper to use the greatest prudence and delicacy in such matters, yet, if such persons refuse to listen to calm reasoning and scriptural arguments and admonitions, they give evidence of a spirit which is inconsistent with Christian principle; and it is no honour to any church to have such enrolled among the number of its members. A church of Christ is a society whose members are animated by holy principles and affections, but most of our churches require to be sifted and purified —to be purified from the communion of those who are actuated by a worldly spirit, and who have little more of religion than the name; and, I know no better external *test* that could be applied for this purpose, than that which

is stated above. A church composed of eighty "right-hearted" Christian men, generous, ardent, harmonious, and persevering in their efforts to promote the extension of Messiah's kingdom, would do far more to advance the interests of true religion, than if they were mixed up with 500 men of a carnal spirit, who are chiefly guided in their religious professions by the opinions of the world. Such a select band would move onward in harmony and peace, without interruption from men of proud and carnal dispositions, "their light would shine before men," and others would "take knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus," and might be induced to follow their example and walk in their steps.

As Christian churches should be zealous in inculcating the duty of liberality, so *they ought to take special cognizance of* ACTS, *and general conduct, which display a spirit of avarice.*

When a church member has been found guilty of uncleanness, of an act of drunkenness or of pilfering an article from his neighbour, a hue and cry is instantly raised; and he is separated from the society, or at least, brought under the discipline of the church. And the purity of Christian communion requires that censure should be inflicted on all such delinquencies, and the offender, if possible, brought to a sense of his guilt, and to the exercise of repentance. But, it is not a little strange and unaccountable, that while strict attention is paid to such *insulated* acts of moral delinquency, which in some instances, are only *exceptions* to the general character of the individuals, and not *habits* of vice; men should be permitted to remain in the church, without the least censure or admonition, who are guilty not only of *acts* which indicate the predominance of avarice, but go on in a *systematic course* of such conduct. Although there is scarcely any thing that so clearly designates the character of an individual, as habitual avarice, yet in many cases, it is scarcely considered as a scandal, because general society is disposed to wink at it—as if an avaricious Christian were not a contradiction in terms.

For example, a member of a church becomes bankrupt and compounds with his creditors, some of whom are poor people, for seven shillings in the pound. He resumes business, lives as luxuriously as formerly; and, in the course of eight or nine years, purchases property and enlarges his domestic establishment; but never thinks of paying off even a *fraction* of his former debts, because he knows that the civil law cannot compel him. Yet, he may hold his places in Christian society, and even in churches that profess a peculiar strictness as to Christian communion. Take another example: A person who enjoyed a lucrative trade, and who was known to be possessed of a certain portion of property or wealth, went to a friend, when lying on her death-bed, *in the absence of her husband;* and, instead of conversing with her on the important realities of religion and the eternal world—endeavoured to inveigle her to subscribe an instrument, conveying to his family the whole of her property; which would have reduced her husband to something approaching to absolute poverty, although they were all members of the same religious community. What shall we think of such a person going from one attorney to another,* to

* A friend of mine lately informed me, that when conversing with a young lawyer of an upright disposition, on a late occasion, he remarked to him, "that he had never been so deeply impressed with the evil dispositions which abound in society, as since he commenced business as a legal practitioner. He had been applied to by persons of all ranks, and of almost *all religious persuasions*—by persons who rank as respectable characters in society, for the purpose of ascertaining whether, by any legal quirk or manœuvre, they could manage to get wills altered or cancelled, and deeds and contracts broken or evaded, in order to enrich themselves at the expense of others, and in violation of natural justice." So little moral and Christian principle is yet to be found even in religious society, that many who name the name of Christ, think all is right if the civil law cannot interpose to punish their deceitful and nefarious practices. A gentleman who is an elder in a Presbyterian church, lately averred to me, in strong language, "that no man should be considered as acting improperly or unchristianly, if he acted in accordance with the *civil law*."

endeavour to ascertain, whether he could by *legal* means, inflict an act of injustice on his Christian friend and brother, and rob him of his worldly substance, and so far as in his power, reduce him to a state of indigence? Or, what shall we think of one who has a flourishing business, in conjunction with a certain degree of wealth, who is extremely fastidious about certain disputed points of religion, and who assumes an air of peculiar sanctity, yet will condescend, in the regular course of trade, to sell over his counter gills of ardent spirits to emaciated and debauched females and others, merely for the sake of the paltry gains which such a demoralizing practice pro cures?

The instances of avarice, as displayed among members of the Chsistian church, are so numerous, that volumes might be filled with the details. What should we think of a clergyman selling a quantity of victuals to a baker; and finding immediately afterwards, that prices were rising, importuned the purchaser to give up the bargain, under pretence of his requiring the whole of it for seed —which was no sooner done than he immediately sold it for an advance of several pounds? What should we think of the same individual receiving from a friend an article of dress, and immediately offering it for sale to gratify his disposition for hoarding? pilfering quantities of nails from the workmen employed on his premises—*cheapening* every article he intended to purchase, till he could acquire it, if possible, at half its value, and manifesting duplicity and falsehood in many of his transactions? Yet, although such conduct was somewhat notorious, and even talked over throughout all the country around, no public notice was ever taken of it by the judicatories of the church to which he belonged.

Many who make the most glaring profession of religion and are extremely fastidious in respect to evangelical views and orthodox opinions, are not unfrequently distinguished by selfish and avaricious dispositions. There would be no end in specifying all the particular instances, and circumstances connected with the manifestation of

covetousness, even by persons who are continually talking about union with Christ, spiritual mindedness, and their own and other's conversions. Some of these, and I state it with deep reluctance and regret, have been known, on many occasions, to practise duplicity and deceit in many of their dealings, in order to secure a good bargain or an extraordinary profit—to traduce the characters of their brethren in order to gain a lucrative situation—to injure most seriously the pecuniary interests of others by not fulfilling a verbal agreement, because the civil law could not *compel* them—to rob the widow and the fatherless, under the pretence of legal right and power—to condescend to every low and squeezing means of deriving profits, and increasing their riches—to deny contracts and obligations, when they could not be legally proved—and, when solicited to contribute to a religious or philanthropic object, have either refused with a sneer, or a shuffling promise, or bestowed with a grudge the most insignificant sum. Now, it is not a little unaccountable, that such practices should be overlooked, especially by Christian commnnities that profess a strict adherence to the principles and precepts of the New Testament. Yet it is a fact, that all the cases I have now stated, or alluded to—although some of them excited the attention and reprobation of a few individuals, were never thought worthy of being brought under the discipline of the church. There is an indifference, and a bluntness of moral perception among the members of many Christian societies, which prevents them from perceiving the malignity and unscriptural character of such dispositions and practices, because they are not generally considered as scandals by the world around them. But, if we wish to preserve purity in the church, to promote the extension of Christianity, to undermine the spirit of avarice and to encourage a principle of Christian generosity—it becomes religious societies to look more narrowly into the disposition and practices of their members, and by every scriptural means, to endeavour to wipe away the disgrace which has been cast on our holy religion, by the worldly-mindedness of

those who "have crept in unawares" into the bosom of the church.

3. The churches of Christ should now begin to distinguish themselves from other societies, *by exhibiting to the world such displays of liberality as Christianity requires.*

If we ever expect to behold society advancing in its progress, the knowledge of Divine truth rapidly extending through the world, and a noble generosity, in respect of money, displayed for accomplishing such purposes; it is to the *church* we must look in the first instance, *to set an example*, to all others, of its disinterested and godlike liberality. The true church is "a city set upon an hill;" it is an object of attention, and minutely surveyed by surrounding spectators, many of whom have their eyes directed so as to mark its defects, and to expose the conduct of its citizens to public view. According to the aspect it presents, and the virtues or vices displayed by those who enjoy its privileges, will be the opinion formed by those who are without its pale, and who may wish to enrol themselves among the number of its citizens. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every one of them, that they "let their light so *shine* before men, that others may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven." If its light shine with brilliancy, it will attract the eyes of surrounding spectators; if the heavenly virtues of its citizens are *conspicuous*, and uniformly displayed in all their actions and arrangements, it will have a tendency to lead them to inquire into their principles and to join their society. Now, this virtue of *Christian liberality* is perhaps one of the most *visible* and *tangible* modes by which the light and efficacy of heavenly truth are made manifest to all. In the display of this virtue, hypocrisy cannot continue long to wear the veil. A worldly-minded man may be induced, in an instance or two, to make a display of generosity for the sake of character; but his ruling principles will soon induce him to muster up numerous arguments against the continuance of such exertions, and to retire from the field of Christian benevolence.

Other virtues and displays of religious principle may sometimes be construed into superstition or fanaticism; but a perseverance in the path of Christian liberality, and a visible exhibition to the world of its benignant and extensive effects, can scarcely be imputed to such causes, but to the influence of higher principles which have been impressed with powerful conviction upon the mind. And I am strongly convinced, that Christianity will never make a powerful and universal impression upon the inhabitants of any land, till its *beneficent effects* be thus visibly displayed in the conduct of those who profess an adherence to its cause. So long as selfishness and worldly-mindedness are displayed by the majority of its professors, so long as many of its ministers are beheld aspiring after its wealth and emoluments more than after the performance of its duties, it will continue to be despised by those whose hearts have never been brought under its influence.

In order to induce Christians to come forward and display their liberality on a larger scale than they have ever yet done, I shall lay before them a few recent instances of generosity in promoting the cause of learning and religion, which, I trust, will prove a stimulus to those on whom God has bestowed riches and affluence, to "go and do likewise." Some of the following statements are taken from Drs. Reed and Mattheson's "Narrative of a visit to the American Churches."

Grenville is a small town which is considered as wholly religious. The settlement was formed by a party of ninety persons from New-England. On arriving at this spot, they gave themselves to prayer that they might be directed in choosing their resting-place in the wilderness, and enjoy the blessing of God. At first they rested with their little ones in their wagons, and the first permanent building they erected was a church for Divine worship. The people retain the simple and pious manners of their fathers. They all go to church; and there are 400 in a state of communion. They give *a thousand dollars a year* to religious institutions. *One plain man*, who has never allowed himself the luxury of a set of fire-irons. *besides*

what he does at home, gives a hundred dollars a year to religious objects. In this settlement, the drunkard, the fornicator, and the sabbath-breaker, are not found; and, what is yet better, in the last report, there was only one family that had not domestic worship."* In this instance we behold a select band of Christian men, voluntarily devoting their wealth to the cause of God; and as an evidence of the effect of such a principle, almost the whole community is distinguished for the practice of Christian virtues.

The Theological Seminary at Andover, which contains a chapel, a set of elegant and commodious buildings, a philosophical apparatus, a library of 11,000 volumes, and embracing a portion of land of 150 acres, was founded not many years ago, at the suggestion of the Rev. Dr. Spring, father of the Rev. Dr. Spring of New-York, in concert with Messrs. Bartlett and Brown. When they met to engage in free conversation on the subject, and had considered the nature of the object to be accomplished, "Well," said Mr. Brown, "I will give 10,000 dollars." "Why," said Mr. Bartlett, "did you not say 20,000, and I would too." Dr. Spring went to Salem, and saw his friend Mr. Norris there, told him what it was proposed to do, and obtained another ten thousand dollars, and thus the work proceeded. Mr. Bartlett, in addition to his first gift, built the chapel connected with the institution, which cost 50,000 dollars, afterwards one of the wings, and several houses for the professors, as well as endowed several professorships. It is thought, that in several ways he has given to this object not less than 200,000 dollars, (about £45,000), and there is reason to believe, that all his benevolent intentions are not yet fulfilled."† Here is an example of truly Christian liberality, which deserves to be imitated by our wealthy professors of religion. Had we only a thousand Christian men such as Mr. Bartlett among us, we might raise fifty millions of pounds from them in the course of a few years; and

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* Narrative, vol. i. pp. 168, 169. † Ibid. vol. i. pp. 425—6.

what immense benefits might thus be conferred on mankind! Mr. Bartlett, however, did not receive this wealth by inheritance, but by his own energies. He was first a shoemaker in Newbury, and became, in the end, for talents and success, a first-rate merchant. He occupies a good house, but lives in a very plain style, and has evidently more pleasure in bestowing than in consuming his property."* And is it reasonable to suppose, that this gentleman is less happy than others, because he has parted with so great a proportion of his wealth for the good of mankind? On the contrary, I am certain, he enjoys a serenity of mind, and a satisfaction infinitely superior to the grovelling mortals, who either hoard their wealth for no useful purpose, or who waste it in gratifying a taste for worldly splendour and extravagance.

After a revival in a church in Geneva, State of New York, in 1830, it is remarked that the appropriations of religious charity were nearly doubled the succeeding year. That church sustains one foreign missionary, at an expense of 666 dollars—thirteen home missionaries, at one hundred dollars each—nine scholarships of the American Education Society, at 75 dollars each; which, in addition to the appropriations for the Bible, Tract, Sabbath school, and other objects of benevolence, amounts to more than 4500 dollars during the first year.† This fact demonstrates, what we have already alluded to, that wherever the principles of true religion and sterling piety take a thorough possession of the mind, they lead to acts of noble generosity; and that a perseverance in such conduct, is one of the strongest proofs of the power of religion upon the heart.

At Dorchester, a village six miles from Boston, Dr. Reed observes, "there are Sabbath schools and an Academy for superior education. The ignorant are taught, the sick find medicine and sympathy, and the poor are promoted to adopt methods of domestic thrift and decency. The whole village presents an example

* Reed's Narrative, vol. i. p. 488. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 19.

of the effect of religion so administered. No children are left to grow up in ignorance; few persons abstain from a place of worship; and here, where every thing else is on a small scale, the schools and churches assume an imposing character." How many villages of this description can be pointed out in Great Britain and Ireland? and is it not owing to our apathy and avarice, that so few scenes of this description should meet our eye?

"I know of no country," says Dr. Reed, "where there are more examples of beneficence and magnificence, [than in America.] The rich will act nobly out of their abundance, and the poor will act nobly out of their penury. There are refreshing instances of individuals sustaining schools, professorships, missionaries, and evangelists. Ministers are repeatedly making movements, in which it was evident that every thing was to be sacrificed to usefulness. I have seen the pastor, at sixty, beloved and happy in his people, give up all to go forth into the wilderness, because he thought that his example more than his labours, might bless the West,—while the church has been as ready to relinquish him, though with tears, when she has been satisfied that it was for the good of the church Catholic. I have seen a band of students, careless of ease and reputation at home, forsake the college at which they had passed with honour, and covenant to go forth together, some 2000 miles, to rear a kindred institution in the desert. And I have seen the aged man kindle at their enthusiasm, and support them with his purse, when unable to be their companion.*

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* "Narrative," &c. vol. ii. p. 282. While returning thanks to Drs. Reed and Mattheson for the entertainment and the valuable information which their "Narrative" affords—the writer of this cannot but express his regret that their work was not published in a nore economical style. Had it been published, as it might have been, at half its present price, and comprised in two neat 12mo volumes, it would have been purchased by three times the number, and have been read by ten times the number of individuals who will be likely to peruse it in its present state. The price of such books

As an evidence of the liberality displayed in the Northern States of America, there are no less than twenty-one Theological colleges, all of which have been instituted since the year 1808; they contain 853 students, and have accumulated 57,000 volumes. There are seventy-five colleges for general education, most of them with professional departments; and they have 8136 students; and forty of these have been erected since 1814. Altogether there are ninety-six colleges and 9032 students. In the state of New York alone, besides all the private seminaries, there are 9600 schools, sustained at a yearly expense of 1,126,482 dollars! Most of the above-mentioned seminaries, with the stately edifices connected with them, have been reared and established by voluntary donations. The "American Sunday School Union" is likewise a noble example of Christian activity and beneficence. In 1832, the eighth year of its existence, it had 790 auxiliaries; 9187 schools were in connection, having 542,420 scholars and 80,913 teachers. The expenditure for that year was 117,703 dollars:—for 1833, it was 136,855. The most vigorous efforts of this society have been directed to the valley of the Mississippi. In 1830, it was resolved unanimously,—"That in reliance upon Divine aid, they would endeavour within two years to establish a Sunday School in every destitute place where it is practicable, throughout the valley of the Mississippi," that is, over a country which is 1200 miles wide, and 2400 in length. There are thirty-six agents wholly employed in this service; and, during 1833, they established 500 schools and revived a thousand.

The following examples of covetousness and liberality are extracted from an American periodical, entitled "The Missionary," for May 2, 1835; published at the Missionary Press, Burlington, New Jersey, by members of the American Episcopal Church.

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prevents their being generally read by the mass of Christian society, and consequently forms a barrier to the general diffusion of knowledge. Has covetousness, on the part of the publishers, any share in this matter?

"A gentleman having called the preceding autumn, to obtain aid for hiring a missionary in Tennessee, I thought I would go and introduce him to our congregation; and we called first on Squire L———, as he is the richest man in town, although I had little hope of success from that quarter. He put us off, as usual, with an account of his numerous family expenses, the frequent calls upon him for money, the duty of seeing our own church free from debt, and our clergyman well provided for, before we assisted others, and concluded with his old, threadbare proverb, "*Charity begins at home.*" We then called on his neighbour, Mr. S———, a man of considerable wealth, and no children to inherit it. He read the paper, said that it was a deserving object, but that he felt too poor to contribute. He coloured slightly as he said this, and then, as if ashamed to give nothing, and anxious to rid himself of such troublesome visitants, handed us 25 cents, (two shillings,) and we took our leave. We met with various success; some gave cheerfully and liberally; others grudgingly, and not a few declined altogether. Our last call was on Mr. R———, the shoemaker; we found him, as I expected, busily engaged at his work. He received us kindly, made inquiries about the state of the church in Tennessee, which showed that he felt a lively interest in the subject, lamented his inability to do *much*, but said he would do *something*. He then stepped into the house, and returned immediately with *two dollars*, which he begged my companion to accept as an expression of his good will. Knowing him to be what is called, in the language of the world, a *poor man*, [though in gospel phrase he is eminently rich;] I asked him how he contrived to subscribe to each one of our benevolent institutions, to take a weekly religious newspaper, to contribute liberally to the support of our clergyman, and yet have so much to spare for a distant church? He told me, it was easily done, by obeying St. Paul's precept in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. In other words, he was *systematically charitable*. He made it a point of duty always to consecrate *a portion of his weekly income* to

the Lord. "I earn," said he, "one day with another about a dollar a day, and I can, without inconvenience to myself or family, lay by five cents of this sum for charitable purposes; the amount is thirty cents a week, (half a crown.) My wife takes in sewing and washing, and earns something like two dollars a week, and she lays by ten cents of that. My children, each of them, earn a shilling or two, and are glad to contribute their penny; so that altogether, we "*lay by us in store*" forty-five cents a week. And if we have been unusually prospered, we contribute something more. The weekly amount is deposited every Sunday morning in a box kept for that purpose, and reserved for future use. Thus, by these small savings, we have learned, *that it is more blessed to give than to receive.* The yearly amount saved in this way is about twenty-five dollars; and I distribute this among the various benevolent societies, according to the best of my judgment." Now this man is a consistent Christian, a bright example of Christian benevolence. He looks upon his little earnings as a *talent* lent him of God, a part of which should be sacredly appropriated to his service."

In the same "Missionary Tract," it is stated, that the Treasurer of the "Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society," on April 10th, received 477 dollars and 41 cents,* of which 5 dollars are the avails of needle work by *four little girls*, from four to eleven years of age, for the church at Jacksonville, Illinois; and 35 dollars from the Sunday school of St. Luke's church, New York; 15 of them in redemption of a pledge for the education of an Indian child, named *Levi Silliman Ives*, in honour of their former rector, now the excellent bishop of North Carolina.

In our own country, we have likewise many characters distinguished for Christian beneficence. Mr. John Lloyd of Nelson square, London, who died in June, 1835

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* A *dollar* is equal in value to about four shillings and six pence, and a *cent* to one half-penny English.

was a liberal contributor to the cause of religion, under the signature L. He was civil engineer, employed at the government dock yards. He retired from business four years before his death, devoting his large fortune to the glory of God, and the good of men, both at home and abroad. More than £12,000 are known to have been distributed among different societies under the letter L; nor was he unmindful of them in his will, having bequeathed to the Missionary Society £4000; the Home Missionary Society £4000; the British and Foreign Bible Society £3000; Religious Tract Society £3000; the Southwark Sunday School Society £1000; Surrey Chapel Benevolent Society £1000; the Christ church Surrey School in Marlborough street, £500; the London Hibernian Society £500;* in all £29,000! What an example to wealthy Christians! and how much good may such an individual be instrumental in communicating to the church and the world! The concealment of his name in the numerous donations bestowed in his life-time, arose from his retiring habits, and a desire "not to let his left hand know what his right hand did," and a hope that others would follow his example.

The Rev. Richard Knill, in the Evangelical Magazine for November, 1835, mentions a Welsh gentleman who has 200 sovereigns ready to be given for introducing more of the piety and talent of our churches into the work of the ministry; and a minister, once a student at Homerton, who proposes to assist four, six, or eight students in their preparatory studies, gratuitously. In the same number of this Magazine, Mr. Rathray of Demarara, mentions that the negroes are beginning to make monthly contributions for the purchase of Bibles, and other religious purposes, and that their first monthly collection amounted to 123 guilders, or £8 15s. and that they make a point of giving something for their children. A woman, says Mr. R., gave me $3\frac{1}{4}$d. one day, saying. "This is for *Jane*, a child about two years old; I give

* See Evan. Mag. for August, 1835.

with the other people for *Kitty* and *Yaha*, when we gave the money to Jacob; but I had nothing to give for *Jane;* and, Massa, take this for her." This idea, suggested by poor negroes, of giving a sum for every child of the family, deserves the consideration and imitation of thousands of those who are better instructed, and who move in a far higher grade than the despised sons of Africa.

The name of Thomas Wilson, Esq., which stands in the front of most of our religious and philanthropic institutions, will recall to the mind of every one acquainted with that respected gentleman, the many hundreds and even thousands of pounds he has generously devoted to the rearing of chapels, to missionary and other benevolent purposes, the effects of which will be felt and appreciated in future generations, and "many will rise up to call him blessed." For, to those whom God has enlightened in the knowledge of the true use of wealth, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." In addition to his many other munificent donations, he has lately given £100 to the New Chapel, Albany street, London. G. F. Agnes, Esq., well known for his benevolent plans and exertions to promote the best interests of British Seamen both at home and abroad, has likewise distinguished himself by his liberal contributions to various religious and philanthropic objects. In addition to his labours and donations in behalf of the "British and Foreign Sailor's Society," and as a member of the committee of the New Australian Colonization Association," he has lately subscribed £50, in behalf of the mission to the colony to be planted in the south-western quarter of New Holland.* Various similar instances of British generosity might be stated were it expedient, although it is much to be regretted that their number is so small.

It is one of the hopeful signs of our times, and a prelude that "God is about to appear in his glory to men" —that Christian churches and congregations are now beginning to come forward with far more liberality, than

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*Evan. Mag. for Dec. 1835.

formerly, in the cause of missions, and of the extension of religion both at home and abroad. The churches under the inspection of the Rev. Dr. Brown and Mr. Gilchrist, in Edinburgh, and of Drs. Mitchell, Hough, and others in Glasgow, have lately distinguished themselves by raising from five to eight, or ten hundred pounds annually, for domestic and foreign missions, besides affording a handsome support to their respective pastors. The church under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, Glasgow, is said to have raised for such purposes, during last year, no less than £1700, besides supporting their pastor.

Mr. Williams, missionary from the South Sea Islands, in one of his interesting addresses to the public, on a late occasion, stated, that a certain congregation in England, mentioned to him with a certain degree of satisfaction, as if it had been a great and unlooked for effort, had raised the sum of £50, during the preceding year for missionary and other purposes, besides maintaining the gospel among themselves. He told them, they ought to do much more; for such an exertion did not amount to a half penny a week, to every individual. They began to bethink themselves on the subject, and next year raised, without much difficulty, above four hundred pounds. Mr. Williams also stated, that, at a late public breakfast, in a certain town in England, a sum of nearly £200 was collected in a few minutes, from a very limited number of individuals—one subscribing £20, another £10, another £5, &c. with the utmost frankness and animation.

The following experiment in behalf of missions, deserves attention, and might be tried, in reference to any philanthropic object. Mr. Clayton, of Walworth, proposed to his congregation, that a thousand of them should take up the subject, and each of the thousand subscribe one farthing a day to the missionary cause. This was recommended to be done immediately after morning prayer, that as soon as they rose from their knees, they might make an offering to the Lord of one farthing. This will raise more than a guinea a day, and conse-

quently, more than three hundred and sixty-five guineas a year, (or £370 4*s.* 2*d.*) which sum would support *six* missionaries in the South Seas.

Having such noble examples as above stated, set before us, Christians of every name should now begin to arouse themselves from their apathy and inordinate attachment to the world, and to consider that they cannot bestow their wealth on a more honourable and important object than in promoting the glory of God, and the best interests of the human family, wherever they are dispersed over the surface of the globe. Were such liberal offerings becoming general throughout the universal church, (and why should they not?) we might, ere long, have the near prospect of beholding the light of Divine truth irradiating every land, the moral wilderness turned into a fruitful field, and righteousness and praise springing forth before all the nations.

It may not, perhaps, be improper to remark, that the contributions of Christians should not be chiefly confined to missionary purposes, or to the support of the stated ordinances of the gospel. These objects, indeed, ought to be supported with far more liberality, and carried forward with more vigour than they have hitherto been. But, while we look abroad to distant tribes, and provide missionaries for their instruction, we are sometimes apt to forget the duty we owe to our countrymen at home; and, while we pay some attention to the religious improvement of the adult population, we too frequently overlook the rational and religious instruction of the young. On the proper moral and intellectual tuition of every class of the young, from two years old till twenty, the whole frame of civil and Christian society almost entirely depends. This grand object has been too much overlooked in all our Christian and philanthropic arrangements; and while it is so, all our other schemes of improvement will be partially frustrated. They will have a tendency only to lop off the twigs and branches of immorality and crime, while the roots of evil are left to break forth in fresh luxuriance. Christian society, therefore, should not rest sa-

tisfied, till every human being, from two years old till manhood, be brought under the influence of an efficient system of intellectual, moral, and Christian tuition, both in our own country, and, so far as our influence extends, in other lands; and a very considerable, if not the greatest portion of our Christian contributions ought, in the mean time, to be devoted to this object, which lies at the foundation of all those arrangements which are calculated to introduce the expected millennium. But, as I have already adverted to this subject, it is unnecessary to enlarge.

4. *Associations might be formed*, particularly among Christians, *for the purpose of encouraging liberality and counteracting avarice.*

As the spirit of covetousness is so extensively prevalent, and as it stands as a barrier to every noble and Christian enterprise, no means should be left unemployed to counteract its tendencies and effects. And, as societies have been formed for less important purposes, there appears no reason why an *Association* should not be entered into for promoting the cause of Christian liberality and beneficence. Such a society might be composed of persons who are willing to devote the *one-tenth*, or any other proportion of their incomes to philanthropic objects. Such a society, if it could be formed, would set an example of liberality to the church and the world around them, and might prove a stimulus to many who might not otherwise have thought of it, to devote a portion of their superfluous wealth to rational and religious purposes. It might establish, in particular districts, systems of education on new and improved plans, as specimens of what ought to be set on foot for the improvement of society in every place. It might purchase barren tracts of land, and make arrangements for their cultivation and embellishment. It might rear small towns and villages, on spacious and improved plans, with every requisite accommodation and embellishment, and calculated for the promotion of health, convenience, and comfort. It might provide employment for

the industrious poor, and commence new enterprises for civilizing and christianizing rude and uncultivated tribes, whether in our own country, or in other lands, and accomplish many other objects which an enlightened benevolence would readily dictate. The frequent publication of the operations of such a society, might be the means of exciting the attention of mankind in general to such beneficent pursuits, and leading to the promotion of similar associations.

However romantic such a project may appear to some, I have no doubt that there are hundreds of benevolent individuals in various districts of our own country, who would rejoice to have it in their power to co-operate with other congenial minds in promoting the best interests of their fellow-creatures in the above, or in any other modes that a rational or religious mind might devise—and that they are only waiting for such openings, in order to give vent to their Christian liberality.

It is an evil, or at least a defect, in many of our Christian arrangements, that, in the first instance, we aim too high, beginning at the top of the scale, when we should commence at the bottom. This is the case when our attention is almost solely devoted to the improvement of the adult population, while the young are, in a great measure, neglected;—and when our efforts are entirely directed to the promotion of the *spiritual* interests of mankind, while their *temporal comfort* is overlooked or disregarded. We have hitherto laid much stress on merely *preaching* the gospel to adults, while we should have been equally active in *preparing the minds of the young* for the reception of Divine truth, by all the rational and religious arrangements which Christian wisdom can devise. We likewise profess great zeal for the spiritual and eternal interests of the poor; while we not unfrequently eave them to pass their existence in the most abject hovels, and to pine away in the midst of filth, penury, and wretchedness.

If we wish that they may appreciate the truths of religion, we must endeavour, at the same time, to meliorate

their external condition, and render it pleasant and comfortable. To tell a poor wretch that he may have spiritual blessings, and eternal treasures, by coming to Christ, while he is destitute of both food and clothing, and we refuse to supply his wants when we have it in our power, is something approaching to a species of insult. By endeavouring to meliorate the condition of the poor, while we offer them Christian instruction, we prepare the way for the reception of Divine truth. For, in so doing, we exhibit a visible proof that Christianity is *a beneficent system*, and tends to promote our happiness, both in the life which now is, and in the life to come.

Now, such societies as suggested above, while they have for their ultimate object, the spiritual and eternal happiness of men, might be instrumental in promoting the external comfort of all ranks, particularly the lower, in furnishing them with employment, in providing them with comfortable habitations, in securing the proper instruction of their families, and directing them in such a course of conduct as will infallibly lead both to present and future enjoyment.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSIDERATIONS, ADDRESSED TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS AND OTHERS, AS TO THEIR AFFECTIONS AND CONDUCT IN RELATION TO COVETOUSNESS.

Having, in the preceding chapters, embodied a variety of motives and considerations, to direct the views of professing Christians, in reference to this subject, it would be inexpedient to dwell on this topic, and therefore, I shall only offer a few additional arguments and considerations.

I. To *professing Christians in general*, we would call attention to the following considerations.

1. Consider, *what* God claims the *Supreme* affection of the heart.

He is possessed of every attribute calculated to excite the adoration and love of all holy intelligences. He inhabits eternity and immensity, and is near to them who fear him, and hope in his mercy. His power and wisdom gave birth to the innumerable worlds which fill the universe, and all the streams of happiness which gladden the hearts of their inhabitants, flow from Him as the uncreated source of felicity. To the inhabitants of this lower world, he has displayed his love and mercy in a way that "passeth comprehension"—in the mission of his Son for the purpose of procuring our salvation—an event which ought to draw forth our highest affection, and gratitude, and praise. And he is "daily loading us with his benefits, giving us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Hence we find the inspired writers, and other holy

men, expressing their emotions in such language as this —"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore wil I hope in Him;" "Whom have I in heaven, but Thee, and there is none upon earth, I desire in comparison of Thee. Who in the heaven can be compared to Jehovah who among the sons of the mighty, can be likened unto him?"

Now, this supreme affection towards God, is altogether inconsistent and incompatible with the indulgence of a principle of covetousness. For, such an affection ruling supreme in the heart, virtually deposes God from his throne, and robs him of the glory of his perfections. As soon may we expect to make the north and the south points of the firmament to meet together, or the light of the heavenly world to mingle with the darkness of the infernal pit, as to reconcile the service of God and mammon. For, while the true Christian, in all his movements, privations, and afflictions, puts his confidence in God, and looks up to Him as his portion and deliverer, "the rich man's wealth is his strong city," and "he trusts in the abundance of his riches." The one joins with the heavenly host, in ascribing "wisdom and power, and glory, and thanksgiving to Him who sits upon the throne;" the other is an *idolater*, who says to gold, "thou art my hope, and to the fine gold, thou art my confidence," and thus in effect, "denies that God is above."

Let Christians meditate deeply on this important point, and consider whether their affections towards the treasures of this world be at all compatible with supreme love to their God and Redeemer. What is it that conscience tells you is uppermost in your hearts? What are among your first thoughts in the morning, and your last in the evening? What is it that gives you most pain, the loss of a portion of your wealth, or the apprehension of the loss of the Divine favour? Are your desires more ardent after the increase of riches than after the treasure in heaven that fadeth not, and the incorruptible inheritance that shall last forever? Is your joy greater in the acquisition of riches or of a great estate, than in the consideration, that God is your Father, and your everlasting portion?

It was a convincing evidence of Job's heavenly temper, that "he did not rejoice when his wealth was great, and his hand had gotten him much." Are you affected with deeper sorrow, when you lose your substance, than when you lose the benefit of Divine instructions, or although you were to lose a sense of the mercy of God? Would you rather be stripped of all your earthly possessions, and go naked into Paradise, than to be laden with gold and jewels, although you should run the risk of falling into the pit of perdition? Do you make it your great and ultimate object to gain riches or an estate—rising early, lying down late, and eating the bread of carefulness? Do you grudge your families the necessary comforts of life, and, when requested to devote an offering for promoting the cause of religion, and the benefit of mankind, do you bestow it with a grudge, or with the spirit of a cheerful giver? In all the arrangements you make as to your lot in this world, are you chiefly directed by the prospect of worldly honour and gain, or by the opportunities you may have of glorifying God, and being useful to mankind? If you regard God as your supreme portion, and the rock of your salvation, you will consider all that you have as too little to be consecrated to his service, and will make the advancement of his kingdom, the object of all your arrangements, and will come cheerfully forward at his call to contribute for this end, according as he hath prospered you, saying with the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?"

2. *Consider the obligations you are under to Him who procured our redemption.*

You profess as Christians, to be under infinite obligations to the mercy and love of our Redeemer, "who died and rose again," that your souls might be rescued from destruction. You profess to believe, that you were "redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ," and that it was one great end of his death, that "you might be delivered from this present evil world, and its affections and lusts," and

consequently, from the dominion of covetousness, which is the ruling passion of the men of the world, and which is utterly inconsistent with the character of the redeemed. While you, then, virtually acknowledge these truths, can you allow the love of the world to *predominate* in your hearts? Can you think it a hard demand that God makes upon you, when he requires a portion of the wealth which he himself has bestowed, to be devoted to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the promotion of his glory? He might accomplish all his gracious designs without your assistance; for all the treasures of the universe are at his disposal. But he has condescended to put an honour upon Christians, in selecting them in particular, to be "workers together with Him," that by their *voluntary* and liberal oblations, they may exhibit themselves in the face of the world, as "followers of the Lamb," and contributors to "the prosperity of Zion." Can you, then, in consistency with your professions, refuse to come forward with munificent and god-like offerings, according to your ability, for every enterprise that has for its object, the promotion of the Divine glory, and the present and everlasting happiness of men? For, it is by such conduct, that your *avarice*, or your *Christian principle* will be detected. The latent principle of covetousness, in its workings in the heart, though open to the inspection of Omniscience, cannot be directly traced by human eyes.

But, if you be hypocrites in religion, your hypocrisy will be laid open, and your true character determined by your refusing to contribute to the service of God, what is in your power to bestow. And this is a characteristic of the sense we entertain of our obligations to the Redeemer, which ought to be more attended to than it has hitherto been in the visible church.

If, then, Christians in general, and especially *wealthy* Christians, admit that they are under inexpressible obligations to Him "who came in the name of the Lord, to save them"—is it compatible with such obligations, "to walk according to the course of this world," and to prevent, by their niggardly offerings, the gracious purposes

of God from being brought speedily into effect? If you profess to celebrate the praises of Him, "who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father"—shall you consider it as *too great an expression* of your gratitude, to devote a hundred or even a thousand pounds, at a time, for carrying forward the grand design of the death of Christ, and the regeneration of the world—when you have hundreds or thousands at your command? If God were calling you to devote *all* your worldly possessions to his service, would you consider it as too great a sacrifice for the gift bestowed? If not, how can you stand aloof and grudge a mere *tithe* of your earthly estate, when it is called for at your hands, and when every needful comfort is still secured for your enjoyment?

Let Christians seriously pause on such considerations, and judge, whether the general conduct of professors of religion, in regard to the dedication of their wealth, be consistent with the obligations they profess to Him who hath procured for them all spiritual and eternal blessings.

3. Consider that *all the privileges and prospects of Christians are incompatible with the indulgence of covetousness.*

Believers are brought by the gospel into the high and honourable relation of "*Sons of God*," and consequently, "joint heirs with Christ Jesus" of the blessings of his mediatorial kingdom. They are under the special care of the Providence of God, who has promised, that "their bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure," and that "He will never leave them, nor forsake them." But a spirit of conformity to the world, a covetous disposition, and an eager desire after earthly honours and splendour, are evidently inconsistent with such exalted privileges. The sons of God must resemble the moral character of their Father in heaven, particularly in the display he has given of his benevolence. But, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," and consequently, he can lay no claim to the prerogatives

of sons. "Whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world," and, of course, he whose soul is absorbed in its pursuits and vanities, has never been brought into this Divine relation, but remains among "the children of the wicked one."

The *prospects* to which the saints look forward in the future world are glorious and magnificent, beyond any thing which this world can present, or which human imagination can depict. In that world, there are scenes and objects calculated to gratify the sublimest faculties of the immortal spirit; an enlarged sphere of contemplation—the beatific vision of God in the effulgence of his glory—"fullness of joy"—a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not—an incorruptible inheritance,—and "an exceeding great and an *eternal* weight of glory."

If Christians, then, believe in the existence of such grand and substantial realities, and have the lively hope of entering, ere long, into their full possession,—is it consistent with such exalted hopes, and such animating prospects, to have their chief affections placed on the vain and transitory objects of this earthly mansion, which must soon be snatched from their embrace? And how can they say it is otherwise, if they are found grasping their worldly treasures so firmly, that nothing but a small fraction can be squeezed from them for the cause of God and the renovation of the world? What should we think of a man come to his full stature, devoting the greater part of his time and attention to amusing himself with tops, marbles, and cherry-stones, as when he was a child, and setting a higher value upon them than upon all the serious employments of life? We should immediately denounce him as a fool, or a maniac, or, at least, as one who acted with the most glaring inconsistency. What should we think of a set of mariners, sent to circumnavigate and explore a large continent, stopping in the midst of their course in an insignificant island, and employing themselves in catching musquitoes, or fishing for shrimps, without attempting to prosecute their course? or of a traveller, on an important embassy to a large city, taking up his abode at an inn, in the midst of his journey, and amusing

himself for days and weeks with gathering shells, or with the humours of a fair, instead of prosecuting the object of his expedition? It is equally preposterous and inconsistent for a man who professes to be "born from above," and to be travelling to heaven, as the place of his ultimate destination, to have his heart glued to the treasures of this world, and "to boast himself in the multitude of his riches."

Let Christians, then, throw off every earthly encumbrance, and arise and act in a manner befitting their celestial pedigree, and their high destination. For what are the treasures of time to him who is begotten to the lively hope of an incorruptible inheritance? What are the frowns of fortune to him who claims the celestial world as his eternal portion? What are thousands of guineas, or dollars, to an exceeding great and an eternal weight of glory? What are the honours, the titles, and the pageantry of this passing scene, in comparison of the riches and grandeur of the New Jerusalem, and the dignity of being "kings and priests" to the "Father of glory," in the mansions not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? As heaven in its height far surpasses the circle of this lower world, as the earth is but a point in comparison to the wide extended universe, and as time, with its circling years, is but a moment to the ages of eternity; such ought to be the hopes and affections of Christians, in comparison of earthly possessions, and of every sublunary misfortune. Were such views fully realized, and duly appreciated; were we living under the powerful influence of that faith, which is "the confident expectation of things hoped for, and the conviction of things which are not seen;" were the great realities of the eternal world, as they ought to be, ever present to our view, in all their grandeur and importance, a very different display would be made of riches from what we now behold, and multitudes, who now stand aloof when called upon for contributions to the service of God, would come cheerfully forward, "bringing their gold and incense, and showing forth the praises of the Lord."

II. I shall next offer *a few considerations to the* COVETOUS, whether professing or rejecting Christianity.

From what has been stated in the preceding pages, and particularly in the preceding article, it will not be difficult for any one to discern whether covetousness or an opposite affection rules in the heart. To those whose consciences declare that they are under the influence of this debasing passion, I would earnestly call their attention to the following considerations.

1. Consider that *wealth*, however great, *cannot secure you from misery and calamity.* The rich man is as much exposed to the afflictions and accidents of human life as the poor, and sometimes his very riches, in which he trusts, are the means of exposing him to diseases and dangers. A chimney top, or even a tile falling from a house, will kill a nobleman as well as a beggar. When infectious fevers are raging around, when the cholera is sweeping away hundreds in the course of a day, can wealth prevent its ravages, or secure you from its attacks? When the thunders are rolling along the clouds, and the lightnings flashing amidst the dismal gloom, can riches secure you from the lightning's stroke, or prevent your hay or corn from being set on fire? When you are crossing the ocean in pursuit of gain — when you behold the tempest raging, and the waves rolling mountains high, can your treasures still the stormy ocean, or prevent your being engulfed in the devouring deep? In such cases, the king and the peasant are on a level, and equally impotent to control the laws of nature, or to counteract the operations of the Most High. How many instances do we see of persons in the prime of life, possessed of wealth and honours, and in the midst of all their earthly hopes and schemes, cut off in a few days, and sometimes in a moment, by a burning fever, by a fall from a horse, the overturning of a chariot, or by an unexpected conflagration? It was but a little while ago, that a lady of noble rank, of great wealth, adorned with the richest jewels, distinguished for her splendid entertainments, and, while she was preparing

for a magnificent fete, on the ensuing day, was involved, while sitting in her apartment, in a sudden and mysterious conflagration, and her body and jewels reduced to an invisible gas, so that no trace of them except a few small burnt fragments of bones has yet been found. But accidents apart—riches cannot ward off those diseases which may prevent all comfortable enjoyment from their possession. The greatest wealth you can accumulate leaves you still liable to the attacks of the gout, the epilepsy, the palsy, the asthma, the burning fever, the gravel, the ague, and to the loss of sight, hearing, tasting, and feeling, and to innumerable other disorders, so that the most splendid spectacles, the most exquisite music, or the most costly viands, may be unable to convey any real enjoyment. Under such diseases, to which all are liable, the most splendid estate can afford little or no alleviation; and the possessor of thousands or millions of pounds may feel far less enjoyment than the poorest peasant;—nay, may smart under pains of body and agonies of mind, to which the beggar expiring on a dunghill is an utter stranger. Wealth, with all its gorgeous trappings, cannot prevent the pain of surgical operation, the bitter taste of nauseous medicines, the agonizing throes of suffering nature, the terrors of a guilty conscience, or the fearful forebodings of a future judgment. And, therefore, the man who, in such circumstances, has no better comforter than the *idea* of the greatness of his riches, is one of the most miserable objects in creation.

2. Consider the *uncertainty* of riches. It is only during the continuance of life that earthly possessions can be enjoyed. "For when you die, you can carry nothing hence, your glory cannot descend after you to the dust." "But what is your life?" It is only "like a vapour," which a small breath of wind may soon blow away. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, while you are hoarding up treasures, and trusting in the abundance of your riches—or even you are aware—the decree of heaven may go forth, as in the case of the rich man in the parable, "This night thy soul shall be required

of thee." Almost every newspaper that comes to our hands, and almost every returning day, bear witness to such sudden transitions from time to eternity. While mortals are reclining on the lap of ease, their hearts overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, running the giddy rounds of fashionable dissipation, or working all manner of uncleanness with greediness—while imagining themselves secure, and foreboding no evil—death interposes, at a day's or even a moment's warning, cuts down their mortal frames, and summons their spirits to appear before the Judge of all. But although life be continued, the wealth in which you place your confidence may soon be snatched from your possession. The providence of God has many ways by which to change the greatest prosperity of this world into the greatest misery and adversity, and, in a moment, to throw down the fortune of the proudest aspirer after wealth, in order to make him contemplate his sin in his punishment. Such a change in your fortune may be produced, either by the rapine of enemies or the treachery of friends, by your own avarice or folly, or by the malice or revenge of your enemies, by the prodigality of your children or the unfaithfulness of your servants. The elements of nature, the hurricane, the tempest, the overwhelming deluge may conspire for your ruin. Your ships may be dashed to pieces on rocks or shoals, or a sudden conflagration may lay all your boasting hopes prostrate in the dust. And wilt thou place thy confidence in such uncertain possessions? "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not; for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly as an eagle towards heaven."

3. Consider *the folly and unreasonableness of covetous affections.* This will appear, in the first place, if you consider, that *riches considered in themselves without regard to their use are of no value whatsoever.* Suppose a man could lay up a stock of clothes and provisions sufficient to last him for 300 years, what would it avail him, if he is certain that he cannot live above seventy, or, at farthest, above a hundred years? Suppose he laid up in a

storehouse 70,000 pair of shoes, to what end would it serve, if he could make use, during his whole life, of only the one-hundredth part of them? He would be in the same condition as a man who had a hundred dishes placed before him at dinner, but who could only partake of one, or of a person who had a hundred mansions purchased for his residence, but who could occupy only one. The same thing may be said of pounds, shillings, and dollars, which are of no use in themselves, but only as they are the representations of articles of necessity and luxury which they may be the means of procuring. How ridiculous would it appear, if all that could be said of a man while he lived, was simply this—that his whole life was occupied in collecting and laying up in a storehouse 60,000 mahogany chairs, which were never intended to be used for the furniture of apartments, or 80,000 pair of trowsers which were never to be worn? And where is the difference in point of rationality and *utility*, between such absurd practices, and hoarding thousands of guineas or bank-notes which are never brought forth for the benefit of mankind? There is no conduct, connected with the pursuits of human beings, that appears more *mean*, *contemptible*, and *absurd*, than such practices (however common) if examined by the dictates of reason and the word of God.

The folly of covetousness likewise appears in this, *that its objects cannot afford solid satisfaction to the mind.* Wealth can neither convey new senses, or open new avenues to pleasure, nor block up the passages of pain and anguish. It cannot produce inward peace, equanimity, domestic comfort, or a delightful self-consciousness of virtue, or of the Divine approbation. On the contrary, the passion of covetousness is uniformly attended with mental anxiety, inquietude, restless and insatiable desires, and keeps its votaries in continual fear of losing what they have acquired, so that they are generally fretful and discontented, and in a kind of hell of their own creating. However much they may have acquired, they are still in the pursuit of more; and the riches of the whole world, were it possible to obtain them, would be inadequate to

satisfy their desires. In their mad career of gain, they will rush forward with the utmost impetuosity, even at the hazard of losing all that they had formerly toiled for and amassed. Marcus Crassus, a celebrated Roman, surnamed *the Rich*, had above 500 talents left him to begin the world with, and by his excessive covetousness, scraped together vast sums of money. Being desirous to know at a certain period, what his estate amounted to, it was summed up at *seven thousand one hundred talents*, or about seven millions nine hundred and eighty seven thousands of British pounds. But it appears, this immense treasure was not sufficient to satisfy his avaricious passion; for, casting an evil eye upon the treasure of the Parthians, he marched with a great force against them, and, being defeated, and taken prisoner, the Parthian general gave orders to cut off his head, and pour melted gold down his throat, to upbraid his excessive covetousness, that never thought he had enough. Such are, not unfrequently, the results of excessive avarice, and such the termination of all the desires and passions, the hopes and fears, the anxieties and pursuits, which are engendered by covetousness. Happiness never would have been expected to result from the pursuits and enjoyments of avarice, if man had retained the full exercise of his reason, and had never fallen from his original estate.

The misery and *folly* of avarice may be illustrated by the following recent occurrence, extracted from the "Sunday Times," of Oct. 4, 1835. "A few days since, an old miser, named Webb, who has, for several years, resided in an obscure lodging in Barrack court, Woolwich, called upon Mr. White, a broker, residing in Powis street, in the same parish, to inquire whether he would allow him to lodge with him, as he had been *uncomfortable* for some time past. The request was complied with, and, in the course of the evening, he took possession of his new apartments. He had retired to rest but a very short time before he was taken ill, and at his request, two medical men were sent for. Upon the arrival of Messrs. McDonald and Gaul, they pronounced him to be in a

dying state, which was no sooner communicated to the patient, than he ordered an attorney to be sent for, as he wished to make his will. An attorney was speedily in attendance. The old man raising himself upon the bed, bequeathed to his daughter £100, to three nephews £30, £40, and £50 each. Upon being asked if he had a wife, he replied 'Yes,' but he had been parted from her three times; that she had been in a work-house near Stroud, in Kent, for a number of years, and that he did not intend to leave her a single penny. He had also two brothers and another daughter, who had all (he said) behaved ill towards him, and he would leave them nothing. Upon being asked to whom he left the residue of his property, he replied, 'To Mr. White for his kindness,' at the same time handing the attorney a paper, which, upon being opened, was found to contain securities for upwards of £800 in the Bank of England, so that Mr. White, (who is sole executor,) will, after paying the respective legacies, clear upwards of £500 for his lodger, who continued to get worse and died on Sunday. It is a remarkable fact, that the deceased (who was 75 years of age) has been frequently seen to pick up bones and rags in the street, and put them in his pocket; and at the time of his death he was in a most filthy condition."

Here we have a picture of a poor wretch, who appears to have spent the greater part of a long life in scraping together £800, and, at last, bestowing the greater part of it upon an entire stranger. We behold him neglecting his own family, and his nearest relatives; and, almost in the very agonies of death, indulging implacable resentment against his own daughter, and the wife of his bosom, and leaving her to be maintained on public charity, when he had enough and to spare. He displayed himself to be little short of a thief and a robber, as most misers are. He robbed the *public* in leaving his wife to be maintained in a poor-house, he robbed his *wife and children* in depriving them of what they had a natural right to, and giving it to a stranger: he *robbed God* of his tithes and offerings, in bestowing no portion of his substance in his service, and he robbed *himself*, in depriving himself of

the good opinion of his fellow-men, and of those enjoyments which might have rendered him comfortable and happy. It is more than probable, that all his domestic broils and contentions, and the alienation of affection he experienced, were the results of his niggardly and avaricious disposition. Who that enjoyed peace and contentment would envy either the life or the dying hours of such a wretched being? Yet such are the rewards, such the *folly* and wretchedness of those who surrender themselves to the power and dominion of covetousness. If riches could procure true happiness, even in the present life, there might be some apology for pursuing them with eagerness; but even this, they are inadequate to confer; for experience demonstrates, that their votaries are frequently among the most wretched of the human race—a prey to restless and malignant passions, and despised by their fellow-men.

The folly of covetousness will further appear, if we consider, that *the objects which it pursues are not to be compared, in point of grandeur and enjoyment, with those which are within the reach of all.* Wealth can command stately buildings, splendid apartments, gorgeous apparel, marble statues, curious pictures, gold and silver vessels, spacious gardens, and other objects which the world calls noble and magnificent. But "what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes." Every spectator that has a taste for such objects may enjoy the pleasure arising from the sight of them as well as the possessor. Every gardener and labourer on a nobleman's estate may participate of the pleasure of viewing his improvements, as well as the owner himself. But, what are all the gorgeous toys and trappings of art, or the beauties which genius can invent, or riches purchase, compared with the beauties and magnificence of Nature? What are the glitterings of the most pompous procession, or the splendour of a Vauxhall, in comparison of the august spectacle of the vernal sun rising in unclouded majesty, diffusing his beams over surrounding worlds, gladdening the animal tribes, and shedding a ra

diance on every object in our terrestrial sphere? There is not a scene, though finished with the most costly refinements of art, comparable to the splendour and magnificence of the sun rising in his glory. All on earth appears a dreary waste till the aurora brightens up the East, as the harbinger of the orb of day:—then the plains are arrayed in verdure, the flowers put forth their colours, the glittering spires appear, the birds warble from spray to spray, and renewed life, activity, and beauty, appear throughout our lower creation—as if a new world had emerged from chaotic darkness. What are the finest varnishings of art compared with the polishings of the bodies of insects, or of sea-shell—or the most exquisite pieces of machinery to the mechanism of a plant, a gnat, or a microscopic animalcula? Above all, what can be compared to the glories of the unclouded firmament, where suns unnumbered shine, and myriads of mighty worlds run their ample rounds? Yet all such august and splendid scenes, with all the variety of beauty and magnificence, with which the Almighty has adorned his vast creation—which are open to the contemplation of all—are overlooked by the worldling as unworthy of his regard.

In short, the folly of covetousness appears in its most striking light, *in preferring objects which are seen and temporal to those which are unseen and eternal.* We can scarely have an adequate idea of the *extreme folly* implied in such conduct, unless we could form some adequate conception of what is included in the word ETERNAL. To enable us to form some faint conception on this point, some of our old writers have suggested the following illustration: Suppose the whole earth to be made up of particles of sand, and suppose a bird to come every thousand years to pick up and fly away with *one* grain, how immense must be the duration before the whole sands which compose the earth, could, by this slow process, be removed! as many thousands of years as there are particles of sand in the whole globe of the earth,—which would amount to the following number of years, 30,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000, or thir-

ty thousand septillions of years! Yet this immense period of duration is still but as a point, or a moment, when compared with eternity! On such a supposition, the Schoolmen stated the following question. "Suppose that you had it in your choice to be happy all the while this prodigious mass of sand was consuming, by this slow method, till there was not a grain of it left, on condition you were to be miserable forever after;—or, supposing you might be happy for ever after, on condition you would be miserable, till the whole mass of sand were removed or annihilated, at the rate of one sand in a thousand years—which of these two cases would you make your choice?" It must be confessed, that, at first view, considering the extreme length of the period—which, to our limited view, appears like an eternity itself—we should be apt to choose the former in preference to the latter. But our reason tells us, that the latter ought to be our choice, since there is no comparison between the one duration and the other, any more than there is between an unit, and the greatest number of figures or sums we can possibly suppose. What, then, must be the extreme folly of those who for the sake of enjoying a few fleeting baubles, for 20, 30, or 40 years, or at the utmost, for "three score years and ten," will run the risk of experiencing all that is included in the idea of a *miserable eternity!* How can we sufficiently denounce the stupidity and madness of those who, resolutely and determinately, make so absurd and irrational a choice? especially, when we consider, that even in this life, the path of contentment, and the ways of wisdom and holiness, are ways of pleasantness and peace! To prefer trifles to the most momentous objects, shadows to realities, the toys of time to the treasures of eternity—if any thing may be termed folly and madness—such conduct ought to brand every one who is guilty of it, in whatever sphere he moves, with the appellation of a *fool* or a *maniac.*

If then, riches are only valuable in proportion to their *use*—if they cannot afford solid satisfaction to the mind—if the objects which the worldling pursues are not to be compared in point of grandeur to those which are

within the reach of all—and if he prefers shadows to realities, and fleeting objects to *eternal* enjoyments—it must be folly in the extreme for a rational being to have his affections placed upon them as the ultimate object of his pursuit.

4. Consider *in what light the objects of covetousness will be viewed, and what comfort they will afford at the approach of death.*

When your soul, which has long been immersed in the cares of the world, feels itself hovering on the verge of life, and about to take its flight into the world unknown,

> In that dread moment, when the frantic soul
> Raves round the walls of its clay tenement,
> Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
> But shrieks in vain—

in what a very different light will you view the perishing treasures of time from that in which you now benold them? You now trust in uncertain riches, and refuse to place your confidence in the living God, who is the alone source of felicity. But, "will riches profit you in the day of wrath," or amidst the agonies of dissolving nature? Will they smooth your dying pillow, or assuage the bitter anguish of your spirit, when heart and flesh begin to faint and fail? Will they then be viewed as a sufficient compensation for the dismal forebodings of future woe which may then assail your conscience, and render you a terror to yourself and to all around you? Alas! they will only tend to plant thorns on your dying couch, to sharpen every pang, and to augment the horrors of despair. Conscience, now lulled asleep amidst earthly vanities, may then awake, "like a giant refreshed with wine," and pierce your hearts through with unutterable sorrows. Many striking instances of this kind have been witnessed by the ministers of religion, when called upon to attend the death-bed of the worldly and profane. "Had I now a thousand worlds," said a certain worldling, who bore a fair character, "Had I a

thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present to God one year of such devotion and good works as I never before so much as intended." The noble Altamont,* who had spent his life in all the fashionable dissipations of the world, a little before his death, on hearing the clock strike, exclaimed with vehemence, "O Time! Time! it is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou now fled forever! A month! O for a single week! I ask not for years—though an age were too little for the much I have to do." And a little afterwards, "This body is all weakness and pain, but my soul, as if strung up, by torment, to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason, full mighty to suffer." Cardinal Wolsey, whose grand aim through life was worldly aggrandizement, a little before he died, declared with anguish, in the midst of his disgrace, "Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs." In like manner, many a one at the hour of dissolution will have to exclaim, "If I had been as anxious to attend to the eternal interests of my immortal spirit, as to lay up treasures which I can never use, I would not have been left to suffer the pangs of remorse which I now feel."

Such considerations demand the most serious attention of those who have *grown old* in the habits of covetousness, and whose grey hairs and infirmities warn them that they are on the confines of the grave. It has been remarked, that, as in winter, the roots of plants retain the sap, when the branches have lost their leaves and verdure, so, in old age, the winter of life, covetousness, "the root of all evil," retains its vigour, when other vices have withered, and fallen into decay. It is strange, indeed, but not more strange than true, that the nearer such men approach to the earth, they become more earthly-minded, so that, at the evening of life, they appear as if they were providing for a long and pros-

* Supposed to be *Lord Euston.*—Young's "Centaur not fabulous."

perous day. No one is more fearful of want, and more hard and griping, than the old miser, who is just about to step into the grave. While other vicious propensities are weakened by the lapse of time, covetousness derives new life and vigour, as age increases. Like a patient in the dropsy, whose thirst is inflamed by drinking, the desires of the covetous are augmented by increasing riches, and they are never more tainted with earthly affections than when their bodies are about to be reduced to their original dust.

The difficulty of subduing such a woful propensity, especially in the decline of life, *is great*, and, in most cases, insurmountable. It is like tearing the skin from the flesh, or the flesh from the bones. There are not, perhaps, twenty out of a thousand, on whom the most cogent or alarming arguments will have the least effect in awakening them to consideration, or turning them from their covetousness. The vicious principle they indulge is so subtle, that you cannot lay hold of it, so as to render it tangible. It is so deeply seated, that you cannot draw it from its hiding place to make it visible in the face of day. You may convince a man who goes on in a regular course of licentiousness and intemperance, of the folly and wickedness of his conduct, by showing him the inevitable miseries to which it leads even in the present life. But we have no such hold on the covetous. In reply to every argument, he will tell you, that what we call covetousness, is only a necessary prudence to augment his estate, and secure it from danger, to provide for the wants of his family, and leave something to his children, when he is gone; and that persons of great repute for probity and wisdom, are found prosecuting a similar course. He is *unwilling* to be convinced of his sin and danger, and is like a person dying of a mortal disease, who yet perceives not the malignity of the malady which is hurrying him to his grave.

But the difficulty of curing such a distemper, though great, is not insurmountable. While there is life, there is hope. Let such as entertain the least suspicions, that

all is not right with them as to this matter, seriously examine their hearts on this point, and weigh the considerations which have already been adduced. Above all things, look up to God, who alone can heal your disease, and purify your affections, and say unto him, in the language of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Remember that your happiness through eternity is at stake; and give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you have fled for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel—till you have renounced your idolatrous affections, and consecrated your heart to God. Your feet are already "stumbling on the dark mountains," and, ere you are aware, you may fall, at the next step, into irretrievable ruin. And if you depart from this world, under the dominion of covetous affections, you are rendered unfit for the mansions of the just, and the happiness which will be their portion forever and ever.

5. Consider, in the last place, that your covetous affections, if obstinately indulged, *will necessarily exclude you from the kingdom of heaven, and involve you in eternal perdition.*

This has already been illustrated in various points of view, (see pp. 88, 148.)

It is the unalterable decree of the Most High, as recorded in his word, that "the covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" and, that those who are banished from this kingdom and its honours, "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." In the face of such awful declarations, to continue in the lust of covetousness, grasping incessantly after riches as the highest object of desire, is the greatest folly and madness of which men can be guilty.

For what a poor compensation will men run the risk of such terrible and appalling consequences! Our Saviour tells us, that it would profit a man nothing, "should he

gain the *whole world*, and lose his own soul." But how often does it happen, that men forfeit their eternal happiness for the merest trifle, and set their immortal souls to sale for a thing of nought! One will sell his soul merely to gratify his lust, or his revenge; another will rather go in the broad way to hell, than be out of the fashion of the gay world. That officer in the army, who lords over his inferiors, in all the pomp of his brief authority, what does he sell his soul for? "For the false glory of swearing expertly, and uniting blasphemy with politeness." That perjured wretch, who bears false witness against his neighbour, or robs him of his property, by fraud or deceit—what price does he put upon his soul? A few guineas, perhaps, or a house, or a few acres of land. Few men ask a throne, a kingdom, a province, or even a barony, but will hazard the loss of their immortal spirits, for the most paltry compensation that this wretched world can afford. "Be astonished O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid."

O, my deluded brethren, arouse yourselves to consideration; and let not the encumbrance of this world's wealth sink you down to the lowest hell. Listen to the dictates of reason, to the voice of conscience, and to the word of God. Consider the terrible reflections you will make upon yourselves, and the deep and inexpressible anguish and regret you will feel at the madness of your choice, should you fall into perdition. Your loss will then be found not only vast beyond comprehension, but *absolutely irreparable.* You will curse those false and flattering pleasures, and covetous lusts, which have cheated you out of eternal life, and rendered you vessels of wrath fitted for destruction,—and would be glad to part with a thousand worlds, were it in your power, for the opportunity of making a new, and a better choice; but in that prison of despair, no price will ever be accepted for your redemption.

Could I describe to you the geography of that dismal region, where hope never enters, and over which hangs the blackness of darkness forever; could I paint the gnawings of "the worm that never dies," and the sharp-

ness of "the fire which is never quenched;" the raging anguish, the fearful despair, the want of the least pity or commiseration; the insolent scorn and cruelty of wicked associates; the "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth," which form only a portion of future misery; how would the folly of your conduct startle, and confound you, in hazarding such an awful, and interminable retribution, for the short-lived enjoyment of trifles light as air! Let such considerations sink deep into the heart of every worldling, and, without a moment's delay, let him take refuge from "the wrath to come," by betaking himself to "the hope set before him," and by consecrating to the service of God all his riches and treasures, all his powers and affections. To all the deceitful promises and prospects, which the world and the flesh may set before you, oppose those emphatic and momentous words of Him who is Lord of the visible and invisible worlds,—"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

III. Considerations addressed to CHRISTIANS, on whom God has bestowed *wealth and influence.*

To you, my beloved brethren, who "know the truth as it is in Jesus," and who feel an ardent desire for its universal propagation, I would offer a few considerations and motives, "to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance."

In the first place, I would have you consider, that *a far greater proportion of your substance than has ever yet* BEEN *thought of by Christians in general, should be devoted to the service of God, and the promotion of the best interests of your fellow-men.*

God is the original proprietor of your estates; from Him you derived them; and if, by the exertion of your own powers and activities, you have acquired the wealth you possess, you are aware, that the faculties which enabled you to acquire riches, were gifts bestowed upon

you by his bounty, and that the train of circumstances which led to your success, was the result of the arrangements of his Providence. You might have been born a changeling, destitute of both bodily and mental energies; you might have been placed in other circumstances, which would have prevented your acquisition of wealth, and doomed you to perpetual poverty; or you might have commenced your existence in the centre of New Holland, or the wilds of Patagonia, where you could never have experienced the blessings and privileges you now enjoy. Over all such circumstances you had no control; and, therefore, you are indebted to God for all these arrangements of his providence, which have placed you in the midst of your present comforts. It is GOD who "hath given you power to get wealth;" for, "both riches and honour come from Him." These are truths which the world in general, and which even Christians themselves too frequently overlook.

You are, therefore, bound by every rational and scriptural tie, to consecrate the wealth and influence you possess to his honour and glory. He does not call upon you to part with any thing which is necessary to your rational and sensitive enjoyment. For the exuberant bounty of his Providence is such, that there is abundance provided, in the system of nature, for supplying the wants of all his creatures, rational and irrational, when their desires are confined within the bounds which reason and nature prescribe. But, he has judged proper to demand a portion of the wealth of voluntary agents, to accomplish his benevolent and gracious purposes in the world; and, it is a high honour conferred on man, that he is invited to be "a worker together with God," in promoting the regeneration of the world.

You are not, therefore, to imagine that the wealth you have acquired, is exclusively your own, and that you may do with it as you please. You are bound, as a Christian, by the most sacred ties, to devote all that is not essential to your rational comfort, in the situation in which you are placed, to such purposes as I have stated

in a preceding chapter.* And, if you entertain a lively sense of God's providential goodness towards you, and of your obligation to Him, who hath redeemed your souls from destruction, and crowned you with spiritual and heavenly blessings; you will resign to his service, without a murmur, nay, with the utmost cheerfulness, a large portion of those treasures, which his bounty has bestowed.

But, to come to particulars:—I shall suppose you have an income of £800 a year. What would you think of devoting £300 annually, exclusively for the purposes to which I have alluded? You will, perhaps, think it is bearing too hard upon you, to make such a demand. But, can you deny, that with the remaining £500, you can enjoy all the sensitive pleasures which a *Christian*, or any rational man ought to desire. You would perhaps require to part with some *luxury* in dress, food, clothing, or equipage, which is not essential to human happiness; but, are no *small sacrifices* to be made for the general good of mankind, and to testify your love to the Redeemer? What, if you were called upon by God, as the Apostles were, to forsake friends, and houses, and lands, for Christ's sake, and to travel into foreign countries, depending every day for supply on the providence of God? What, if you were required, as was once done, in the case of a certain rich individual, to "sell all that you have, and give to the poor," as an evidence of the sincerity of your Christian profession? or what if you were required to submit to persecutions and torments, like the first Christians, or to flee to deserts, and rocks, and mountains, like the pious and persecuted Waldenses? Would you consider such sacrifices too great for the sake of your Redeemer, and for the certain prospect of an eternal weight of glory? If not, how small a sacrifice is that now demanded, compared with the privations and sufferings of those illustrious characters of whom the world was not worthy, "who wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins, in deserts, in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tor-

* See Chapter VI. throughout.

mented?" What would those Christian heroes have thought, had God thought proper to grant them the *tenth part* of your income? How would they have exulted in the Divine Beneficence? and, like Mr. Park, when he received a mess of pottage from an old negro woman in the wilds of Africa—would have exclaimed, "Thou hast prepared a table for us in the wilderness, in the presence of our enemies; our cup runneth over; surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

To the proposal now made, you will perhaps object, that the station of life in which you have hitherto moved, requires you to spend nearly all your income, that you cannot think of being singular, or altogether out of the fashion; that you must forego sumptuous entertainments, and might be considered by your genteel friends and acquaintances, as mean and niggardly; that you behoved sometimes to walk, when you might ride in a carriage; that you would be obliged to occupy a house of seven apartments, instead of ten; to deny yourself the luxury of a fine painting, or an elegant piece of furniture, or a sumptuous dress, similar to those of your compeers; that you must provide portions for your children, when you are gone; along with many similar excuses which might be brought forward. But, on the slightest reflections, you will perceive that these are not *Christian* considerations, but arguments based on selfish principles and worldly views. To bring forward such excuses, is virtually to declare, that you consider the pomp and fashion of this passing world as more important than promoting the glory of Messiah's kingdom; that you would rather behold missionary enterprises frustrated, and the heathen perishing by millions, than part with the luxury of a gig, or a landau; that you would rather see the poor starving, and dying of want, as they are now doing in a neighbouring island,* than not enjoy with your gay friends your accustomed splendid entertainments; that you would see

* Ireland—see "Report of the Commissioners," &c. and *Appendix.*

the industrious labourer without employment, and living in wretchedness, rather than abstract from luxury a small sum for the melioration of human beings, and the improvement of society; that you would behold another generation rising up in ignorance and vice, rather than part with an expensive and unnecessary piece of furniture, in order to assist in laying the foundation of universal instruction; or, that you would rather see the earth overspread with deserts, and its inhabitants living in the most wretched hovels, than resign two or three apartments not necessary to your comfort, for assisting in the renovation of the world.

This is the plain English of all such selfish and fashionable excuses; and I am sure that no Christian, who has his heart deeply impressed with a sense of Divine things, and of his obligations to God, will consider them as valid.

With regard to laying up portions for children, I have already offered some remarks, which need not be repeated.

As a follower of Christ, you are called "to take up the cross," and submit to *some* sacrifices for his sake. The Christian life is a warfare against the world, and the flesh, and "spiritual wickedness in high places;" and, therefore, you must lay your account to strive against many of the passions and propensities of your nature,—to counteract, in some cases, your own taste and worldly feelings, and even to be "accounted," as the Apostles were, "fools for Christ's sake." But O, my Christian friend! how small a sacrifice is it to resign enjoyments which are little more than *ideal*, while every comfort, essential to human happiness, is still retained! The consideration of the happiness you may thus be the means of diffusing in various directions, ought to be far more than a compensation for the slight sacrifice (if it may be so called) of a portion of your pecuniary treasures. The effect, too, which your conduct, in this respect, may have to excite hundreds of your fellow Christians to follow your example, and the influence it may have, even on future generations, should be a powerful motive to constrain you to "devise liberal things," in reference to the

cause of God and religion, that you may be entitled to the highest rewards given to those who improve the talents committed to their trust, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

In the above remarks, I have supposed a Christian to be possessed of an annual income of £800. Were he possessed of an income of £2000 or £3000, I have no hesitation in saying, that he ought to devote at least the one half to the promotion of the great objects of religion and general philanthropy, and that one whose income is £200, or under, not descending below £50 or £60, should devote at least the *one tenth* of it to the same purpose. This proportion is no more than what was imperatively demanded by government, as a compulsory *tax* on all such incomes, during the late war; and the same sum is now requested on a voluntary principle, for a higher and nobler object.

Let Christians seriously consider, as in the presence of God, and as indebted to him for the hope and prospects of eternal life, whether they dare, or ought to refuse it. As to all lower incomes than those alluded to, a certain proportion ought likewise to be allotted for the same objects, except in the case of absolute poverty. Perhaps a twentieth, or a thirtieth at least, is the lowest rate or proportion which should, in any case, be allotted to the service of God.

2. Consider, that *all the pecuniary efforts you can possibly make, are essentially requisite for the enlightening and regeneration of society*, and that *your parsimony may be the means of retarding the universal promulgation of the gospel.*

I have already shown, in chapter VI., the vast extent of the enterprise to be undertaken, and of the work to be accomplished, and the immense sums requisite for carrying them forward; from which it will appear, that all the liberality that every Christian can display, is absolutely necessary in order to promote the renovation of the physical and moral world, and to diffuse the knowledge of divine truth among the nations. Almost all the departments of the social state require to be remodelled—uni

versal education, on a broad and universal basis, requires to be established in every land—the poor require to be furnished with employment, instruction, and comfortable habitations—"the face of the earth" requires to be "renewed," and the deserts, marshes, and barren wastes, transformed into fertile fields, and luxuriant vegetation—the 600 millions which people heathen nations, require to be instructed in the knowledge of the true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent—the "isles afar off must be visited, and vast continents explored, that their inhabitants may be visited with the day-spring from on high and the knowledge of salvation." The gospel must be published to all nations, and the way prepared for the triumphant reign of Messiah over all kindreds and people. Every valley must be exalted, and every mountain and hill must be levelled, to prepare a high way for the approach of Him "to whom is given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him"—"whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." All these extensive and important objects require to be accomplished by the combined efforts of the citizens of Zion, in connexion with the movements of Divine Providence and the operations of the Divine Spirit, and an imperious call is addressed to every one to engage in this holy enterprise. Say not ye, therefore, as the ancient Jews, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." "For, thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways; go up to the mountain, and bring store, and build this house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah. Be strong, all ye people of the land, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. For thus saith the Lord, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the

trength of the kingdoms of the heathen, and I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now, therefore, my brethren, listen to the admonition: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, CONSIDER YOUR WAYS;" consider whether you have yet done all that is in your power, to accomplish the purposes of the Most High. Consider whether your indifference and *parsimony* have not prevented the preparations requisite for rearing the spiritual temple of Jehovah. And if you are convinced, that, were you weighed in the balance, you would be found wanting, it is now time to make up your deficiency, and to awake to spiritual activity, and to holy enterprises. Will you allow the love of the world to prevent the extension of the gospel, and to retard the approach of the millennial era, and the full glory of Messiah's reign? Yet this ye do, if ye do not come forward, with cheerfulness, to devote all the treasures you can possibly spare, to prepare the way for the proclamation among all people of "the salvation of our God." What a sad reflection is it, should conscience accuse us, that we have been guilty of standing as *obstructions* to the progress and prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom? It is not unlikely that a reflection of this kind may occasionally damp the joys of individuals, even in the celestial mansions. We are told of some who shall be saved, "*yet so as by fire*," implying, that, though they shall be rescued from perdition, yet a mark of disapprobation will be set upon cer tain parts of their conduct, which will prevent them from receiving the *higher* rewards of the heavenly state. But every Christian should so act as to render himself worthy of the highest approbation of his Lord and master, and of the higher seats in the mansions of bliss. Those to whom God has given abundant treasures, have the best opportunities of thus distinguishing themselves; and we know, moreover, that "to whom much is given," from them "much will be required." Let it never then be surmised of you, that your conduct appears as if you set a higher value on the pomp and fashion of the world, in laying up treasures on earth, in providing portions for your children, or in living in luxurious abundance, than

in hastening the arrival of the millennium, or in aiming at the highest honours of the celestial kingdom. Let the promises of your God and Redeemer, the pleasure of beholding the gradual progress of the world's regeneration, and the glorious prospects presented to your faith, animate and encourage you to come forth as a Christian hero in the cause of universal benevolence; and although you should be sneered at by the men of the world, "great shall be your reward," in that kingdom where they who have been instrumental in turning many to righteousness, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever." *

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* It is not a little unaccountable, on Christian principles, that so many wealthy professors of religion leave the world, without bequeathing any portion of their substance for religious and philanthropic purposes. An aged gentleman, a professor of religion, who had for many years attended a respectable dissenting place of worship, died a few weeks ago, leaving money and property to the amount of £20,000. But, although he was unmarried, and had no children, nor brothers nor sisters, not a single pound of it was devoted to the public, charitable, or religious objects—while the one half of this sum might have been appropriated to such objects, without the least injury to surviving relatives, most of whom stood in no need of it. About a month ago, a lady informed me, that a gentleman in one of our populous cities had died worth £300,000. I replied, in the words of the late J. B. Wilson, Esq., "He has died *wickedly* rich." She was startled at the reply, and said "that he was a respectable character, and had acquired his wealth in an honourable way." I asked, how much of it he had left for the purposes of religion and philanthropy? She replied, "that she had heard of nothing being left for such purposes, but he had, no doubt, given during his life, something for charitable objects; and that it was very proper and dutiful for a man to provide for his family, that they may move in their proper station; for we are told, that he who provideth not for his household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," &c. I replied, such a man ought to have left at least, £20,000, for rational and religious purposes, without in the least injuring his family, in whatever station they were brought up, and I could not but entertain a very low opinion of that man's Christianity, who could accumulate so much wealth, and leave none of it to promote the cause of religion and the best interests of mankind. But my worthy female friend could not be persuaded but that a man might lawfully do with his own as he pleased, and that his family were entitled to the whole of what he possessed. This is a

3. Consider the import of the words of your Redeemer, '*It is more blessed* (or happy) *to give than to receive.*"

The disposition to communicate happiness to fellow-intelligences, is one of the characteristic traits of the true Christian, by which he is distinguished from the selfish and avaricious soul, and from the world that lieth in wickedness. It is the source of all natural and mora good, the spring of all public and private happiness, and the only real excellence of moral and intelligent beings. A disposition to *receive* happiness from others, but never to be instrumental in imparting it, would create a vast blank throughout the universe; and its countless tribes of inhabitants would remain forever destitute of enjoyment. Creation might present a scene of beauty and fertility to the eye, but the affection of moral beings would be cold and chill as the frosts of winter, and their hearts would never thrill with joy amidst surrounding associates. But from the voluntary and benevolent agency of intelligent beings, beginning at the great first cause of all enjoyment, and descending through every subordinate rank of intellectual existence, flows all that happiness which is enjoyed, either in earth or heaven, by every rank of moral agents, whether men or angels, cherubim or seraphim. This is the plain import of the maxim of our Saviour. "It is more happy to give than to receive," namely, that the communication of good ought to be the great object of every Christian, and that it is more desirable and honourable to *impart* enjoyment to others than to receive it from them.

I cannot conceive a source of greater happiness on earth, than that which would flow to a Christian, whom God had blessed with abundance of wealth, in distributing at least the one-half of his substance, in works of piety and beneficence. He might soon behold, every where around him, the young trained up in knowledge and vir-

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fallacy which ought to be removed from the minds of professed religionists, as it implies a virtual denial of our dependence upon God, and of our obligations to consecrate our wealth and talents to the accomplishment of his benevolent designs.

tue, the gospel preached to the poor and to every class, the ignorant instructed, the industrious labourer supplied with employment, the afflicted relieved, the wants of the destitute supplied, schools, churches, and commodious dwellings with garden plots, rising on every side; the desert cultivated, and the wilderness made to bud and blossom as the rose. Such a character would be as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and would cause the widow's heart to leap for joy. Wherever he appeared misery would smile, and his presence would be hailed with gratitude and joy. How many improvements of this description might be effected, and how much happiness diffused, by judiciously distributing in every district five thousand, or even one thousand pounds annually, on such objects? But where is the man or the Christian to be found who pants for such celestial enjoyment?

In the exercise of this disposition we become imitators of God, and are assimilated to his character. When he brought creation into existence, he could have no possible view, in lanching innumerable worlds into the depths of space, but to display the glories of his nature, and to confer benefits on their inhabitants. Could we wing our flight through the regions of immensity, and survey the various ranks of the population of the universe—could we mingle with the hosts of angels and archangels, and witness their enjoyments, we should find that all the arrangements of the Almighty, in reference to their situation and activities, have a tendency to contribute to their felicity—that his *benevolence* is displayed wherever matter exists, and wherever there are sentient and intellectual beings to participate of his bounty. He is not adored by the heavenly host, or by any of his creatures, "as if he needed any thing" to augment his glory, "seeing he giveth to all, life and breath, and all things." He is declared in scripture to be "abundant in goodness," "good to all," continually "doing good," and that "his tender mercies are over all his works." Now, we are commanded to be imitators of God in his universal beneficence. "Be ye merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful; love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you; that ye

may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust." By acting in this character, we are likewise imitators of the blessed Redeemer, "who went about doing good" to all classes of men, without distinction of rank or nation. Though he was "the brightness of the Father's glory," yet, "for our sakes he became poor, and took upon him the form of a servant." His whole life was an uninterrupted series of beneficent actions. He had compassion on the ignorant and the distressed; he fed the hungry multitudes in a desert; he opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, made the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. He restored to disconsolate parents the children whom death had snatched from their embrace; he healed all manner of sickness and disease among the people, and none ever applied to him for relief, who was refused assistance or spurned from his presence. And now that "he has entered into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us," he is engaged in similar benevolent services. For, we are told, that "the Lamb in the midst of the throne feeds" the redeemed inhabitants, "and leads them to living fountains of water, and wipes away tears from every eye." We are, therefore, exhorted to "be followers of Christ as dear children, and to walk in love; for he hath set us an example that we should walk in his steps."

Again, in the exercise of the disposition to communicate happiness, we imitate *the angelic tribes*, who are incessantly engaged in similar services. Those glorious beings not only contribute to the happiness of each other, but rejoice to wing their downward flight to communicate messages of mercy to mankind. Although they dwell amidst the splendours of eternal day, they refuse not to descend for a season to our wretched world. They entered the lowly cot of the Virgin Mary, with a message of joy; they flew swiftly to Daniel, to explain his vision; they unbarred the prison gates to rescue Peter from his enemies; they comforted Paul with the assurance of divine protection, while tossing on the raging billows; and, in

numerous ways with which we are unacquainted, "they encamp around those who fear the Lord," and are "ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation." In short, heaven, whither we profess to be journeying, is a scene of pure beneficence. In that happy world, the spirits of the just will spend an immensity of duration, in an endless diffusion of benefits among countless orders of holy intelligences; and while they derive enjoyment from blessings *conferred* by kindred spirits, they will still find, that "it is *more blessed to give* than to receive." For in so doing, we most nearly resemble the original source of felicity, who is "the blessed and only potentate," supreme in happiness, yet incessantly diffusing benefits among unnumbered beings, throughout the whole extent of his universal empire.

Were such dispositions to be generally prevalent among men, what a happy world should we look upon, compared with that which we now behold! Were it *universally* prevalent, into what a glorious scene would society be transformed! Heaven would descend to earth, and an image would be presented of the intercourses and the joys of the blessed above. And, what should hinder such a disposition from being universally displayed, but the selfishness and depravity of man? Why may not our world be filled with intelligent beings, devoted to such noble and god-like aims, as well as with tribes of selfish demons? There is no physical impossibility to prevent such a blessed transformation. But the WILL of man stands as a barrier; he perceives not in what his true happiness consists; "he *loves darkness* rather than light," and misery more than happiness, and will not bend his ears to the instructions of heavenly wisdom. No man, however, ought to assume the name of a Christian in whom this benevolent and god-like disposition does not exist. Were Christianity universally diffused, and its holy principles recognised as the basis of human action, we should, ere long, behold such displays of beneficence in all the regions of the globe, and among every kindred and tribe and people; and the sighs of the disconsolate, the groans of the oppressed, and the shouts of the warrior would be heard no more.

Let me beseech you, then, my Christian brethren, to cultivate this benignant principle, and show to the world that you are actuated by higher aims than the sons of avarice, and that you are of one heart and affection with the angels of light. To do good, and *to communicate*, forget not, for with such sacrifices, God is well pleased. And, if you are thus disposed, you will come forward, with cheerfulness, in every work of universal philanthropy, and will not grudge any of the small sacrifices we have now proposed. You will thus be instrumental in augmenting the sum of happiness on earth, and prepared for engaging in the benevolent employments of the inhabitants of heaven.

4. Consider the *fleeting nature of earthly enjoyments*, and how soon you may be called to part with every thing you now possess.

You may be disposed, at first view, to think it hard to part with a hundred or two hundred pounds for the good of others, while you do not know how much you may require for yourself and family, at some future period. But you ought to recollect, that we should be directed by what appears to be *present duty*, without looking forward to mere possibilities, or contingencies which may never happen, and should trust in God, as to all the future arrangements of our lot in this world. While we perplex ourselves with anxieties about futurity, that futurity, in relation to the present scene, may never arrive. In such an hour as we think not, the messenger of death may make his appearance to summon us to the world of spirits. So numerous are instances of this description, and so frequently reported in our daily records of intelligence, that no one can, with any show of reason, flatter himself that he shall certainly live to enjoy a long succession of months or years. And, should the grim messenger arrive at a time when you have been withholding your wealth from benevolent objects, and laying it up for future use, how many painful reflections may arise to embitter your comforts and shake your hopes, on the eve of your departure

—nay, to produce painful feelings, if that be possible, even on your entrance to the world of bliss.* When you have the immediate prospect of bidding a last adieu to all earthly riches and grandeur, they will appear of a very different value from that by which they are now estimated. At that period, you will look upon them in the light in which a great man in a neighbouring country, viewed some extraordinary mark of distinction and honour sent him as he lay on his death-bed. "Alas! (said he, looking coldly upon it) this is a mighty fine thing here in this country, but I am fast bound for a country where it will be of no service to me." Reflect then, my Christian friend, on the views you will have of riches, at the hour of death, and let this consideration excite you, while in the vigour of health, "to devise liberal things" in regard to the furtherance of every philanthropic object, so that no bitter regrets may disturb your last moments, and that "*an abundant entrance* may be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour."

5. Consider the *promises and declarations of God* in reference to the certainty of temporal support.

There is scarcely any thing that causes so much anxious thought and perplexity to mankind in general, as the con-

* It is not altogether improbable, that certain painful feelings or reflections, may occasionally arise in the mind, even in heaven itself. We have no reason to believe, that it is such a state of absolute perfection, at least on our first entrance to it, as entirely to prevent some transient uneasy reflections. The saints will carry with them into that state all their *recollections* in reference to their dispositions and conduct in the present world, and, therefore, it is not unlikely, that the sins they committed in this life, and particularly, the little zeal they displayed in promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, after they were brought to the knowledge of the truth—may occasionally produce an unpleasant feeling in the midst of all their joys. This idea seems to be included in the representation given in the parable respecting the *degrees* of honour to which persons will be advanced in proportion to their zeal and activity in the cause of God, while upon earth. But all such uneasy reflections, should they arise, will only tend to lead the soul to higher admiration of the boundless and unmerited love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

sideration—how they are to acquire the means of subsistence? and, on this account, they have always an argument at hand, against distributing their money for public and religious objects. But there is nothing more clear and express than the promises made to the Christian in reference to his temporal support, so that while he is diligent in his business and conducts his affairs with prudence and discretion, he need never harass his mind with anxious thoughts about future subsistence. The following are a selection of those divine declarations on which his faith and hope may confidently rely, as the words of him who is immutable, and who keepeth covenant and mercy to a thousand generations.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. *Honour the Lord with thy substance*, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; *so shall thy barns be filled with plenty*, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great riches and trouble therewith. A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. I have been young, (says the Psalmist,) and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. *The liberal soul shall be made fat*, and *he that watereth shall be watered also himself.* Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure. Take no anxious thought (says our Saviour) for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? The time is short,—it

remaineth that they who weep be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away. He who *soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly;* and he who *soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully;* for *God loveth a cheerful giver* And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. I have learned (says Paul) in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. But I have all and abound, and my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches; but in the living God who giveth us all things richly to enjoy—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." The ancient worthies "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance." Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt." "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. A good man showeth favour and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion. He hath dispersed, he

nath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever. Surely he shall not be moved forever. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Such Divine declarations as the above, should have a powerful influence on the mind of every Christian, in reconciling him to his situation in life, and to the measure of wealth which Providence has allotted him; and, inspiring him with a noble liberality in the distribution of his riches, without fear of consequences. For God has pledged himself in these promises and declarations, that they who trust in Him, and conduct their affairs with discretion, shall want for nothing that is truly desirable in their pilgrimage through this world. "The young lions may lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." All the saints, in every age, have in some measure experienced the truth of these declarations, and, in many remarkable instances, they have been strikingly fulfilled, in cases where all prospects of subsistence had disappeared, and all hopes of deliverance had nearly failed; as might have been illustrated by many interesting facts recorded in the history of the church, and of individual Christians, had our limits permitted.

I shall conclude with the following sentiments,—and an anecdote stated by Dr. Witherspoon.

There are those who are rich in their poverty, because they are content, and use generously what they have; there are those, who, in the midst of their riches, are really poor, from their insatiable covetousness, or profusion.—*Calmet.*

The prayer which Socrates taught his pupil Alcibiades, is remarkable, and deserves the consideration even of a Christian:—"That he should beseech the Supreme God, to give him what was good for him, though he should not ask it; and to withhold from him whatever would be hurtful, though he should be so foolish as to pray for it."

The following piece of private history that happened n Great Britain, is related by the late Dr. Witherspoon, in one of his sermons.

"A gentleman of very considerable fortune, but a stranger to either personal or family religion, one evening, took a solitary walk through a part of his own grounds. He happened to come near to a mean hut, where a poor man with a numerous family lived, who earned their bread by daily labour. He heard a voice pretty loud and continued. Not knowing what it was, curiosity prompted him to listen. The man, who was piously disposed, happened to be at prayer with his family. So soon as he could distinguish the words, he heard him giving thanks with great affection to God, for the goodness of his providence in giving them food to eat, and raiment to put on, and in supplying them with what was necessary and comfortable in the present life. He was immediately struck with astonishment and confusion, and said to himself, 'does this poor man, who has nothing but the meanest fare, and that purchased by severe labour, give thanks to God for his goodness to himself and family, and I, who enjoy ease, and honour, and every thing that is grateful and desirable, have hardly ever bent my knee, or made any acknowledgment to my Maker and Preserver?' It pleased God, that this providential occurrence proved the means of bringing him to a real and lasting sense of God and religion."

APPENDIX.

THE following statements extracted from the "Report of the Commissioners," who were sent to Ireland to investigate the state of the lower classes in that country, exhibit a picture of the effects of covetousness, combined with its usual accompaniment—*apathy* in regard to the sufferings of others, which would disgrace a *Pagan* land, and much more a *Christian* land.

These Commissioners appear to have conducted their inquiries openly and fairly. They held their sittings in upwards of one hundred parishes. They were sent through the whole of the four provinces of Ireland, and obtained information from all ranks and classes, from "the highest landlord, down to the lowest beggar."

The details stated below, are only *specimens* of hundreds of similar details, equally horrible and revolting, which are scattered throughout a quarto volume of between four and five hundred pages. The answers to the questions put, taken *viva voce*, are printed *verbatim*, under the following seven heads. 1. Deserted and orphan children. 2. Illegitimate children and their mothers. 3. Widows with families of young children. 4. Impotent through age and infirmity. 5. Sick, poor. 6. Able-bodied out of work. 7. Vagrants.

1. The following extracts relate to *widows with children.*

They are seldom half fed, say a cloud of witnesses. One meal of potatoes a day, is the most they can expect, eked out with unwholesome weeds. Mr. Cotter, rector of a parish in the County of Cork, says, "One evening a parcel of workmen came to me for soup, which I was in the habit of giving. Some cabbage stumps that were thrown out of the kitchen were lying. The pigs and fowls had picked them almost quite bare. *I saw myself six or seven of the poor women turn their faces to the wall, and eat the stumps the pigs had left. Peggy Kiernan*, a beggar woman, says, the widows get, when at

work for the farmers, $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per day. They rarely beg in public, unless when their children are so young they cannot leave them."

The Assistant Commissioners found widow *Halloran* working a quilt. She worked eight hours a day, and it would take her a week to finish it, and all she had bargained for, was one shilling. A man who happened to be standing by, said he would not give two pence a day, for what any widow in the parish would earn by her labour. Parochial assistance is unknown, and the question, whether the absentee proprietors who hold nearly the entire parish, ever contribute to the relief of those who pay them rent,—was answered with a laugh, *that expressed astonishment at the thought of such a thing being entertained.*

When the cholera appeared at Cork, a small hospital was established, and a few patients admitted into it. Notwithstanding the great dread that was entertained for the disease, *three poor widows feigned sickness, in order to gain admission;* one, the widow *Buck*, had two children. When these women were detected, they refused to go out. In the county of Limerick, there has been no widow driven by her necessities to prostitution, though one of these virtuous poor women states, that she lives in a hovel without a roof. "I have no house," says she, "but I got a few poles, and made a narrow shed, by placing them against the wall and covering them with loose weeds. The end is open to the air, and there is no door." She expects, with her boy, *to pass the winter under the same shed.*

Even in the north of Ireland, where Protestants chiefly reside, similar privations are found to prevail. The following is a picture of a *Londonderry* widow.

The Assistant Commissioners visited one widow. She lived in a wretched hovel on the road-side, about half a mile from Dungiven. There was a little straw in a corner, which, covered with a thin linen quilt, served as a bed. Over two or three kindled turf, a girl of about ten years of age, was bending, and a middle-aged woman was sitting, spinning, in the centre of the hut. She said that the girl was the youngest of eight children, and was only a month old, when, by her husband's death, she was left wholly dependent on her own exertions. None of the children were at that time able to assist her; and the only employment open to her was spinning, by which she could then make 4*d.* a day. By her spinning, which was gradually diminished to 2*d.* a day, she brought up her eight children, sending them out to service as they grew up. They are now married, or engaged in service. The three eldest married when they were under eighteen. "They never," said she, "got a noggin of broth in charity; nor did a handful of potatoes badly got, ever enter my house. I always kept the roof over them, and prevented their begging." She never had any land; *her landlord having taken from her, that which her husband held;* but he left her the house,

half of which was blown down, and in the remaining half, she still lived. She seemed cheerful and contented, but said, she had gone through unutterable hardships. "Many a time," said she, "a neighbour woman that lived with me, did not know that I had only eaten two or three potatoes that day, and, at night, I used to be up two or three times, when I could not sleep, thinking of my misfortunes, and looking out for the day-light to begin working."

Widow *M'Crow*, another inhabitant of the north, stated, "The rain comes in through the roof of my hut. I sleep on the ground, which is constantly wet, and have not so much straw as would fill a hat. I have but a single fold of a blanket to cover my whole family. I have had it for eight years. My children are naked. I have a lump on the shoulder, for which I cannot get medical assistance." It was agreed by all present, that few widows can be better than this woman.

The gentry, says the Report, *scarcely ever assist the poor widows*, but the labourers will often work a day for them gratis in building a hovel. Some of these widows have too much pride to beg, and pine in hopeless misery, in some wretched cabin. In the single parish of Killaloe, in the county of Clare, the R. C. Priest speaks of *sixty widows in this destitute state.*

"I had not," says *Mary Slattery*, "a sod of turf to warm a drink for my sick child. All I had to-day, was four cold potatoes. The rain comes down through the roof, and my lodger never slept a wink last night, trying how to keep the bed-clothes dry. As God knows my heart, I spent the night on the hearth-stone, crying and praying that God would look down on me and my children."

As to laying by any thing when in employment, that is out of the question. "No man," says Mr. Donaugh, "could lay up any thing for his old age, unless he have an old lease. In other cases, there is no chance of it."

The effect of this wretched life, and diet, is too apparent, and cuts off the sufferers before the usual period of human life. Labourers usually break down at the age of fifty-five, from the effects of scanty food, and exposure to the weather. The same is reported of mechanics. If there is a bridge to be built, there will not be a man above fifty-five upon it. Poverty bends their spirits and breaks them down. It appears from the evidence, that the custom of supporting their parents, which used to be the pride of the Irish peasants, is decaying fast, from the pressure of the times, and incapacity. Labourers supporting their parents, are often reduced to one meal of dry potatoes. It sometimes comes to counting the potatoes. Then, as the second family grows large, the daughter in-law begins to grumble. She will not see her children starved to feed her husband's parents. "Being always at home, she is apt to find her husband's father in the way, and you will see the old man cowering in the chimney, as if

he were endeavouring to hide himself from her." An old man says himself, "the few potatoes I eat, sir, cannot do me good, for I am afraid they are grudged me, and what is more, I grudge them to myself, when I see so many mouths opening for them." One witness states, that "the turning out of the father is so common, that the contrary is the exception."

The Rev. *Mr. Gibson* mentions the following case. "The wife and family of a man who had been respectable, died here of *want*, a short time since. They could not get any thing to eat at times, more than once in two days. *They died rather than beg.*" Such cases, alas! are by no means scarce. Mr. Riley says, "two months ago, I saw an old woman eighty years of age, going over the bridge to beg her breakfast. When she got to the top, she stopped to rest herself, and, when I came up to her, she was dead." Dr. *Walsh*, M. D., states, "that in his parish in Kildare, many have died of actual starvation."

Yet, in a country where such scenes are daily passing, all the great land-owners are averse to the introduction of poor laws, and for this most selfish reason, that the principal burden of supporting the poor, would, (as it ought,) fall upon themselves. It is curious to remark, that the farmers and shop-keepers, in a word, the middle and producing classes of the Irish community, approve of some system of poor laws, while *the gentry as decidedly set their face against any such system.* "*The gentry never give to beggars*," says one of the witnesses, "high walls surround their demesnes, and *a dog is kept at the gates to prevent the entrance of a beggar. Absentees*, even in times of dearth, or infectious disease, *send over no subscriptions.*" "They send over nothing but latitats and ejectments," says the Rev. Mr. Burke. The evidence of Dr. M'Hale, R. C. Archbishop of Tuam, written by himself, is remarkable on this point. "The gentry," says the Archbishop, "scarcely ever subscribe regularly for their support: even in the seasons of appalling distress, (1832 and '34,) there were individuals of large fortunes, who did not subscribe one shilling. The burden is thrown by the affluent gentry on their poorer neighbours; *orders are often issued by the proprietors of large mansions, not to suffer such a nuisance as a beggar, to approach the gates.* I could name the persons. The general opinion is favourable to a provision for the poor, in case the burden do not fall on those classes that are already taxed for their support. It is in vain to make a provision for the poor, unless the property of the absentee, and the church lands are almost exclusively fixed with the amount; otherwise, such a provision would be no relief. All that could be gained by taxing the industrious classes, would be to make that compulsory which is now voluntary. If the properties of the absentees are taxed, and the church lands be re-appropriated to their original destination, a large fund, now lying idle, will be applied to the support of the people."

In the examinations in the county of Longford, Mr. K—— said, he represented the feelings of a great number, when he expressed himself "in favour of a support for the infirm, especially from a tax on absentees, one of whom draws £10,000 per annum from the county, and £3000 from the parish, *without contributing any thing for the support of the poor.*"

2. Under the head of "*sick poor*," we find that no relief exists for the poor, when sick or diseased.

If the disease be contagious, they are either put out of the cabin into a temporary hut, or the rest of the family leave it and them. Any nourishment the neighbours may give them, is left at the door, and the creatures crawl out to take it in. Many have been disabled for life, by scrambling out of bed to get what is left for them at the door. "The day before yesterday," says a witness, "a woman coming from Galway, was taken ill on the road. The people thought she had the cholera, and refused to let her into their houses. She lay by the side of a ditch and died in the morning." "Our diseases," says Mr. Powel, "are caused by cold, hunger, and nakedness. The poor man on regaining his appetite, finds nothing to eat. A little food would restore him, but he sinks for the want of it. People are constantly tapped for a dropsy *arising from starvation.*" "I have frequently," says Dr. *Walsh*, "found the sick lying *on the bare damp ground, straw being considered a luxury which the pig only, which pays the rent, has a right to enjoy.*" In some places, there are charitable loan funds; "but," says a witness, "*the gentry and landlords seldom subscribe.*"

When we go to beg at a gentleman's house, says *Pat Mitchell*, beggarman, it is the wife that asks relief, and the answer frequently is, "go from the door, woman." "The farmers are kindlier by far. It is the humble sort that live on the road-side, that are really good to us; *but half the country, God help them! have no Christianity in them at all.*" *Molamey* says, that, in the mountains of this parish, when the potatoes fail them, they bleed the cattle, and eat the boiled blood, sometimes mixed with meal, but oftener without it; *he has himself known the same beast to have been bled three times in one season; they never bleed their cattle for this purpose, when they can procure any other food;* he says, "the mere labourers would not get a potatoe on credit; they would gladly take credit *on any terms*, if they could get it; they would promise *any thing* before they would beg, which some are obliged to do, and to leave their own place in shame. They take one journey by night before they begin, that they may save the exposure."

The Assistant Commissioners entered into the cabin of a woman labouring under the disease of water in the chest. She said, "I have

not this morning been able to rise from that bed of straw. I felt a sort of gnawing about my heart. The only thing I had was these few potatoes, (pointing to some on the ground between her and a little girl, who had the small-pox,) *you see they are rotten the most of them, and all are wet.*" "Yet these very people," says a respectable newspaper editor, "thus abandoned by wretches—fiends in the human shape, who call themselves landlords, exhibit some of the finest feelings that ever adorned the human heart." When one has a tolerable coat, he lends it to a neighbour, that he may carry something to the market, and look decent. The Rev. *Mr. Gibbon* says, "when I go to a village to hold a station, one man comes to me, and confesses, and when he has done, goes out and lends his coat to a neighbour, that he may come in also; the very women do the same, and lend not only their cloak but their gown."

Mary Carr, who is a widow, and who is rearing up a foundling, says, "the blanket that was on my bed, I cut up to make two little petticoats for the child. *I do not know what kitchen means.* I am not able to buy a ha' porth of milk in the fortnight, and have not tasted a herring these three months." This woman, says Mr. G. Gottingham, is a fair specimen of the widows of the parish.

In transcribing the above revolting statements, I have been almost led to feel ashamed of the order of intelligent beings to which I belong. It cannot but fill every feeling and well-principled mind with a holy indignation, that such scenes should be found to exist in a country that boasts of its religion, and requires so much money for its support. The facts are not the exaggerations of any political party; as they were *publicly* and *minutely* investigated, and are admitted by all parties to be substantially correct. They are corroborated by the statements of the late Mr. Inglis, in his "Journey throughout Ireland in 1834," and, by all others who have lately visited that misgoverned, and unhappy country. At this very moment, hundreds of poor starving wretches have been ejected by their *rich* landlords, from the half acres and miserable hovels they occupied, in the midst of the most inclement season of the year, to wander through the country, houseless and forlorn, and to perish of hunger and cold. One of the unfeeling miscreants, who acted as factor to some of the landlords, when remonstrated with on the dismal and destitute situation of the poor people, who were deprived of every shelter, and of every means of subsistence, had the fiendish effrontery to declare, that "*they might go and* EAT ONE ANOTHER, *if they pleased.*"

Even the "*Quarterly Review*," which is not generally very squeamish on such subjects, exhibits a becoming indignation at this picture. "The wonder surely is, (says a writer in No. 109,) not that men become monsters under such circumstances; that they make war upon the world, and the world's law which neglects and oppresses

them; that being left to the destitution of the savage, they exhibit his disposition, adopt his system of self-preservation, and disregard the first principles of society. No! the wonder is, that philosophers are found audacious enough to maintain that sufferings, such as we have related, should remain unrelieved, in order to keep up the charitable sympathies of the people for each other, uncontaminated by the odious interference of a legal provision for the destitute." And again, "the social virtues are stifled in an atmosphere of such misery and selfishness, for the instinct of self-preservation overpowers every other feeling."

Perhaps there are few instances of *covetousness* more palpable and odious, than are displayed in reference to the facts that have been now stated. It is a striking feature connected with these facts—that, while thousands of poor creatures are living in roofless huts, with nothing but a cold damp floor to lie upon, and not even enough of a few rotten potatoes for their food,—the nobility, gentry, and rich landlords, *seldom contribute* in the least, to relieve their misery, while none are more loud in their bawlings about religion, and the support of the church. It is a most unhappy and unnatural state of society, that when thousands are revelling in the midst of luxury and debauchery, there should be tens of thousands immediately around them, suffering every privation, and many of them absolutely perishing for want in the midst of plenty and splendour. That such scenes should be daily realized in a country blessed with fertility, and a fine climate; in a country where so much wealth is lavished in folly and extravagance, and where so many enormous pensions and sinecures are enjoyed, both from the church and the state, cannot but fill every generous mind with swelling indignation. Here is surely a fine opportunity for wealthy gentlemen of benevolent feelings, to come forward and display their generosity. What might hinder them from purchasing some of the Irish moors, and mosses, and wastes, and setting thousands of the labouring poor to bring them into a state of cultivation, and to rear for themselves comfortable habitations? The blessing of thousands ready to perish would rest upon them, and their own hearts would feel a satisfaction superior to all the pleasures derived from pomp and pageantry, and riotous abundance.

What becomes of all that wealth which has been bestowed on the Bishops, Deans, and many of the Rectors of the Episcopal church; the one half of which would go a great way towards meliorating the condition of the lower class of the population of Ireland? When the lands and other emoluments were first allotted to the bishops, it was, on the provision, that the one half, or at least the one third of the proceeds should be devoted to the poor. This appears to be admitted by the benevolent Archbishop of Tuam, in his evidence stated above. "If the church lands," says the Archbishop, "be *re-appropriated to the original destination*, a large fund would be supplied to the sup-

port of the people." And would not the one half, of incomes amounting to *eight*, *ten*, *fifteen*, or *twenty thousand* pounds annually, be quite sufficient for *any order* of ministers belonging to the Christian church? That such an appropriation has never yet been voluntarily made, even when the most urgent demand for it existed—seems to indicate, that there is a glaring want of Christian principle and benevolence, even among the ministers of the Christian church.

THE END.

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